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A South American Perspective

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Introduction: Against Typological Tyranny

Cristóbal Gnecco and Carl Langebaek

Typological thinking is our guide in the world, the lens through which we categorize (emotions, fellows, plants, stars, cultures). We can only avoid it if we get up rather early every day to invent the world anew, from the beginning and thoroughly; if we accept the burdensome task of creating from scratch the categories that now preexist us, and with which we forded day-to-day waters, but that would no longer exist. The task would be arduous and endless and, provided it ends, it would have to start again the next morning and, well, until the end of eternity.

However, if we cannot live without typological thinking, we can at least escape its tyranny—such is the purpose of the chapters in this book. What does this mean? Several things. Firstly, accepting that extant typologies order the world, that they reduce it to manageable proportions, does not mean that we should also accept that it only fits in them and that we cannot invent new categories, new ways to interpret, and new analytical avenues. Secondly, typologies have a (unnecessary) tendency to universalize; to be more precise, the scientific (ab)use of typologies provided them with a universal character that is not part of their definition—typologies are universal only to the extent that the theory that builds need them to be. Thirdly, typological tyranny essentializes because it demands that its categorizations be noncontingent to time and space. Fourthly, typologies, like any other social product, do not escape ideological struggles; they are not innocent and neutral constructs but power devices. Typological thinking is also a political theory; for example, evolutionism is solidly based on typologies that translate cultural differences into temporal hierarchies, thus feeding colonialism. In other words, they are not happy disciplinary findings as much as mechanisms acting within enduring power structures.

Typological thinking in archeology is as old as the discipline itself; both are related to the formation of national states and to colonial expansion as providers of cultural hierarchies and a new temporality—that of modernity. Typologies in archeology have been, from the start, part of the horizon of politics. The nineteenth century is a typological century (and political, of course, with the imprint of the bourgeois triumph). However, since confrontations to the bourgeois order became real threats to its hegemony, the historical sense was filed (and typologies along with it): the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first three or four of the twentieth century could breathe without typological surveillance (indeed, this was the

time of particularism and relativism). However, since archaeological theory adopted neoevolutionist typologies on society from the 1960s onwards (a trend linked to the historicist revival activated by the bourgeois optimism of the second postwar) their crushing weight on the interpretations of the past has not ceased. Of particular note has been the widespread tendency to use them prescriptively, leading archaeologists to be more interested in "confirming" the existence of types (especially those related to sociopolitical organizations) from a few cultural traits than to trying imaginative interpretations, sensitive to local contexts and capable of inquiring for different dimensions of social life. The tyranny of typological thinking has narrowed dramatically the interpretative spectrum and has shown that reality imitates fiction: Jorge Luis Borges said decades ago that archaeologists seek what they know, in advance, that they will find.

This book provides readings that question the tyranny of typological thinking through case studies in several South American countries. Its purpose is to show that typologies are inevitable (they are, after all, responsible for creating networks of significance in which symbols are meaningful) but that their tyranny can be overcome if they are used in a critical, heuristic and nonprescriptive way: critical because a complacent attitude to their tyranny is replaced by a militant stance against it; heuristic because they are used as means to achieve alternative and suggestive interpretations but not as last and final destinations; and nonprescriptive because instead of using them as threads to be followed they are used as constitutive parts of complex and connective frames. The friends we have summoned to this book are here because their works propose, unlock, and seek. Instead of repeating venerable formulas, they suggest paths (sometimes not much more than trails) rarely traveled by archaeologists or ignored in favor of handsome highways generously paved by iteration. Besides, some of them also read typologies from the contemporary present, asking about their place, their role, even their fate. Those contemporary readings situate typologies in a historical perspective, contesting the reification to which they have often been subjected.

From Brazil Cristiana Barreto challenges a unilinear archaeological imagination. From the analysis of three different kinds of deposits (shell middens in the southeastern coast, ring villages in the central region, and settlements in the middle Amazon and lower Rio Negro) she takes distance from ecological reductionism (an enduring inheritance in Brazilian archeology) and shows that the environmental framework is not enough to understand different forms of social organization, some allegedly unequal. Her use of three cases in different environmental conditions is deliberate and highlights her idea that archaeological analysis should ignore neither local conditions nor social phenomena such as demography, ritual intensification, the mobilization of the work force and the establishment and maintenance of supra-local interactions.

Rafael Gassón, using an example from the Venezuelan Orinoco, criticizes rigid and unilinear interpretations that avoid variations in the same way that populations avoid the plague. Rafael analyzes social aspects that have received selective (and meager) attention—competition, trade, and war—from an archaeological perspective that departs from the automatic projection of typologies built from chronicles of the time of the European arrival in South America. In his view the sociopolitical

organization of the pre-Hispanic societies of the Orinoco should not be understood from generalizations that do not consult local trajectories, structured upon social inequalities differentially expressed in each case. In the case of the Orinoco, the tendency to generalize from a few paths has reached delusional levels: stating that a society was relatively egalitarian is immediately identified as equivalent to stating that all were. The same happens when talking about complexity. Instead, his research constructs a picture of great diversity.

Rodrigo Navarrete's concern is different and has to do with an important issue that hermeneutics brought to bear in archeology: our readings of the past cannot ignore their contemporary contexts of production. Rodrigo shows that the interpretations of Palenque societies in Venezuela have been made from three approaches: the first, with a long-lasting tradition in Latin America, posits that civilization developed in the highlands and barbarism in the lowlands; the second, centered on a scientific perspective that objectified those societies from neoevolutionist categories; and the third, awareness of its place of utterance, which showed interpretative (contextual) oscillations and opted for a modern version. But that's not all; Rodrigo wants to escape textualism and to do so, turns his analytical eye to the Indigenous societies of his country, a *loci* of information (and transformation) of the archaeological gaze.

Alejandro Haber has been long proposing that the automatic and uncritical use of Western typologies in archeology has had two devastating effects (this is our reading of his work, not his): to limit the interpretive spectrum to a few dichotomies, essentially modern; and to leave out different (local) interpretations, including those of the people whose ancestors (usually denied) interest archaeologists so much (although only as vestiges of the past, not as referents for the present and the future). Although we could say that one effect is disciplinary and the other political, they really cannot be separated; for that reason, we better say that such a dual effect is disciplinarily political and politically disciplinary. The interpretation of Alejandro relativizes the modern separation between culture and nature showing how Andean societies (it could also be others as well, not subdued by Western logocentrism) understand differently the relationship between people and the beings with which they interact; in such an understanding the criterion of exteriority does not exist.

Andrés Laguens found in the work of Pierre Bourdieu analytical tools that allowed him to enter rarely trodden paths. Perhaps Bourdieu never imagined that he would speak Spanish from northwestern Argentina, as Andrés wants him to do, but his concepts of field and social space are relevant to interpret pre-European social inequalities. The chapter has another virtue: alternative interpretations—that is, interpretations that elude traditional typologies—are not afraid of numbers or statistics. It is not surprising to read that Andrés finds, at the end of his analysis, the particular character in the differential distribution of resources; for that reason he deems it necessary to consider social inequality in polythetic terms and to define differences from several coexisting capitals, whose interrelation escapes universalizing typological mandates.

The analytical theater of Axel Nielsen lies in the Bolivian highlands. His interpretation of Late Intermediate Period archaeological contexts questions neoevolutionist

typologies, noting that they are unable to accommodate the idea that political integration could have been accompanied by diminishing social differences; he states that such typologies are not useful in understanding the sociopolitical organization of pre-Inca societies in the region and wields arguments that undermine the legitimacy of the conceptions of power, authority, and wealth traditionally used by archaeologists. The same direction, but from the northern tip of South America, is followed by Wilhelm Londoño and Victor González.

The identification of chiefdoms has been an obsession of the archaeologists who have worked outside Mesoamerica and the Central Andes. (It truly is an unintended coincidence, of which we are aware only now, as we write this introduction, that all of us participating in this book come from areas located outside the "nuclear" areas of the Americas. Does this "coincidence" deserve a psychoanalytic interpretation or an explanation based on the esprit de corps or on marginal solidarities?) Victor González, convinced that this phenomenon has prevented the adequate assessment of the abundant theory on chiefdoms, uses geographic patterns to indicate that the spatial arrangement of the monumental centers in the Upper Magdalena (in the southern Andes of Colombia) during the Regional Classic period can be read from a model of competitive hierarchies. His chapter suggests that the theory on settlement patterns (inescapably typological) allows moving out of the classificatory obsession. Does it? No, because the author uses a model that classifies. To what obsession does his chapter refer to? If we replace *obsession* by *tyranny* Victor's article is yet another challenge to the interpretive closure produced by the obsequious and repetitive use of known and exhausted typologies. One more thing: his analysis shows that the equivalence between power and wealth does not apply in this case, which invalidates its universal pretense.

Wilhelm Londoño's chapter takes a slightly different perspective from a neighboring region of the Andes of southern Colombia. His attack to the simplistic and stereotypical use of the concept *chiefdom* turns Tierradentro into a battlefield but his arguments are equally relevant to other regions, times, and social types (evolutionary or not). His work questions the Western load in the conception of power used by archeology and suggests that it should be reconfigured. In such a task other symbolic universes such as Indigenous, may bring in interpretative freshness and help the discipline break free of its colonial devices. Wilhelm chose to illustrate this freshness showing the role played by ritual and beliefs, not economic benefits nor domination, in the configuration of power in some Indigenous societies from southwestern Colombia.

Hope Henderson explores the importance of place-making in chiefdom societies, particularly in the case of the Muisca of Colombia in a small village in the Leiva Valley. She suggests, alongside other previous researchers, that the Muisca leaders did not monopolize all ritual practices, even though small material differences between elite and nonelite households can be identified. Her study calls for a more holistic and dynamic approach to the identification of social differences and, in particular, to the study of aspects of Muisca archaeology that have received little attention, including architectural differences and comparative studies between settlements. Hope's chapter provides provoking theoretical references that will be of

immense value to archaeologists trying to understand social organization away from simplistic and unilinear models, using both material culture and ethnohistorical and linguistic evidence.

In their chapter on Antarctic archaeology, Maria Ximena Senatore and Andrés Zarankin challenge the notion of orderly sequence of dates, events, and heroes to understand the exploration of the Antarctic, the white continent. A master narrative that focuses its attention on the "Heroic Age" and industrial whaling has resulted in a vision of history concentrated on historic sites and monuments. This approach is replaced by archaeological research focused on the material culture associated with exploration. Ongoing research has helped to understand living conditions and the specific nature of human settlement in the region. Although none of the sites can be considered testimony of specific events or a place of "great historical value," they provide new light on the sealers' daily practices and how they related to the exploration and exploitation of the Antarctic and the new landscape. History is thus not "preserved" but instead provided with meaning and sense, those aspects of human understanding that conventional typologies plainly disdain.

Finally, us. To avoid the annoying and distanced third person, we exchange roles. Cristóbal (according to Carl) has written a chapter that deals with a theme that cross-cuts not only the issue of typologies but also their function in modern archaeology. Typologies that translate to the realm of archaeological interpretation as the definition of well homogeneous, self-contained cultures are criticized in favor of the recognition of hybrids. Instead of denying them, Cristóbal calls for admitting their existence and potential. His contribution to this book reconstructs the historicity of archaeology in the context of its interpretations of the pre-Hispanic cultures of southwestern Colombia, usually posited as sharing the same origin and the same civilized worldview during centuries, only to collapse due to the arrival of "savage" peoples with a "less developed culture." By historicizing archaeological practice, Cristóbal unveils the modern rationality behind "scientific" and "objective" interpretations of the past. Supposedly "neutral" ways of looking at the past deny archaeologist's bearing in the creation of what they "discover," frequently justifying and providing a "natural" perspective on issues like the civilized-primitive dichotomy, "decadence," "horizons," "archaeological areas" and a long list of concepts that have traditionally been used as the tool-kit of scientific archaeology.

Carl (according to Cristóbal) sets to understand processes of pre-Hispanic social change in the Colombian Eastern Cordillera, criticizing the interpretations that posit that elite power was based on controlling labor and fertile lands, a frequent (universal) disciplinary extrapolation based on the modern idea that differences in terms of wealth implies unequal, inherited, and material-based distinctions. The very meaning of "wealth" is thus called into question. From excavations at El Infiernito (Leiva Valley) and from the analysis of ethnographic and ethnohistorical information, he proposes alternative interpretations. At the same time, he takes distance from interpretations uncritically based on documentary evidence from the sixteenth century or on recent ethnographies. He feels that they have led to an approach to the past which has no historical significance in that which ignores cultural specificities that are only

meaningful in certain places and certain times. Instead of contributing to an intercultural understanding (across time as much as across space), such an approach has imposed social categories and types as universal and timeless models. Carl's work—and the same can be said about Wilhelm's paper—establishes a dialogue between archeology, history, and ethnography not intended to build relational analogies but to expand the interpretive horizon, making it sensible to nonmodern cosmologies. Above all, he vindicates diversity and history.

This tight and concise presentation brings together diverse papers dealing with diverse topics from diverse places. What do they have in common? Their proposals enhance the imagination, showing novel horizons that are not restricted to the security of venerable typologies that have been questioned because of their suspected association with colonial narratives and modern mandates. Ah! Novelty reappears on the scene. That would be nothing special (the *new* arises from time to time in capitalist historical cycles) if it were not that archeology has a pathological tendency to prefer known paths. Nothing more (and nothing less). There is little else to foretell, except inviting readers to venture into the book.

Contents

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Cristiana Barreto is a Brazilian archaeologist. After receiving a Masters degree in Anthropology from University of São Paulo, she pursued her doctoral studies at University of Pittsburgh, and obtained a Ph.D. degree in Archaeology from University of São Paulo. She conducted archaeological research in several regions of Brazil, including excavation of inland shellmounds of the Southeast, and circular villages of Central Brazil. She turned to Amazonian archaeology through the survey of museum collections, and the organization of several exhibitions and catalogues on ancient Amazonia, including "Unknown Amazon" (at the British Museum, London) and "Brésil Indien" (at the Grand Palais, Paris). Her thesis focused on the funerary ceramics of the Amazon and how diverse iconographic patterns of representation of the dead may relate to different social organization principles. She is currently a Research Associate at Arqueotrop (Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia, Universidade de São Paulo) where she studies representations of the body in both figurines and anthropomorphic vessels from the Lower Amazon. She also collaborates in the project "Arqueologia de Monte Alegre, Pará" (based at Museu Goeldi, in Belém), coordinating the analysis of ceramic materials and its archaeological contexts. She has published on both the results of her investigations and on the history of archaeology in Brazil.

Rafael Gassón was born in Caracas, Venezuela. Currently he is Associate Researcher and Chairman of the Laboratory of Epistemology of Anthropology at the Centro de Antropologia, Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas, Caracas. He obtained the title of Anthropologist (Magna Cum Laude) from the Universidad Central de Venezuela in 1988 and his Ph.D. degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1998. His research interests include lowland South American archaeology and historical ecology, as well as the history of archaeology in Latin America.

Cristóbal Gnecco is Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Cauca (Colombia), where he works on the political economy of archaeology, the geopolitics of knowledge, and the discourses on alterity. He currently serves as Chair of the Ph.D. Program in Anthropology at his university and as a co-editor of the journals *Archaeologies* and *Arqueología Suramericana*.

Víctor González is an anthropologist, focused on the archaeological study of chiefdoms and the factors of societal change, with geographic interest in northern Santander and the Upper Magdalena regions of Colombia. He obtained his Ph.D. (1998) in Anthropology from the University of Pittsburgh and has worked as researcher for the French Institute of Andean Studies (IFEA) and the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia-ICANH. He has taught at the Universities of Los Andes, Rosario, Externado de Colombia and the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, helping to organize their graduate programs. He served for 10 years as Coordinator of Archaeology at the ICANH, the national authority in Colombia. He has promoted the use of technologies to improve efficiency in data collection minimizing impacts on the archaeological heritage. He has actively promoted research and the legal protection of the archaeological heritage, helping formulate strategies to combat trafficking of cultural properties, strengthening the legal system, and establishing the official archaeology record systems and procedures. He has co-edited the journal *Arqueología del Área* Intermedia and engaged in collaborative research with colleagues of various nationalities.

Alejandro Haber is an Argentinian archaeologist and anthropologist, from the National University of Catamarca and CONICET (National Council of Scientific and Technological Research). He is regionally focused in the Andes and he is interested in coloniality as coded by academic disciplines. He is currently involved in un-disciplining archaeology as a no-methodology for cultural and social research.

Hope Henderson currently works as an associate professor of anthropology at the National University of Colombia. Her investigations in Mesoamerica and Colombia focus on the evaluation of change in prehistoric societies through the documentation and comparison of households and communities. She is particularly interested in discussions about theoretical constructs that enable a more culturally specific consideration of political leadership in ancient and non-western societies. Her latest publications include "Understanding households in their own terms: investigations on household sizes, production, and longevity at Káxob, Belize," in *Ancient households of the Americas: conceptualizing what households do* (2012) and "*Reproducción social y creación de desigualdades. Discusiones desde la antropología y la arqueología suramericanas*," co edited with Sebastián Fajardo (2012).

Andrés Laguens (Ph.D. 1995, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina) is the Academic Director of the Instituto de Antropología de Córdoba, Argentina, and Senior Researcher at the National Council for Science and Technology of Argentina. He is professor of archaeology at the Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades of the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, where he also coordinates the Doctoral Program in Anthropological Sciences. His research focuses in social inequality in past societies and the relationships between people, things and nature. He has been conducting a research project at the Andes of Argentina since 1996, analyzing the emergence of social differences and their reproduction and persistence as multidimensional phenomena. At the present time, he is interested in past onthologies and material culture in Andean societies. Since 2002 he has collaborated with Argentine Justice in the

archaeology of clandestine detention centres of the last military dictatorship. He is also interested in the public communication of archaeology and has been curator of the current exhibition of the Museo de Antropología of Córdoba and other temporary ones.

Carl Henrik Langebaek is a Colombian anthropologist, graduated from Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, in 1985. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in 1992 and has since worked on issues related to social change among pre-Hispanic complex societies, particularly in the Eastern Highlands, Tierradentro and the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. He has also conducted research on ethnohistorical information regarding ancient trade, and economy among the Muisca of the Eastern Highlands. More recently he has focused his research on the history of Colombian and Venezuelan archaeology. During his career he has been fellow at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington and in 2009 he was awarded the Alejandro Ángel Escobar award in the field of social sciences for his book *Herederos del Pasado*, and investigation dedicated to the idea of the pre-Hispanic past in Colombia and Venezuela. He has been dean of the faculty of Social Sciences at Universidad de los Andes and currently is the Vice-President of research at the same institution.

Wilhelm Londoño is an anthropologist who graduated from the University of Cauca, Colombia. He holds a Ph.D. in Human Sciences from the National University of Catamarca, Argentina. His research interest has been directed towards the understanding of cultural and political dimensions of heritage. He has also conducted research in historical archeology in SW Colombia. He is currently working in the Colombian Caribbean as a professor of anthropology at the University of Magdalena.

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Axel E. Nielsen got a doctorate in History at the University of Córdoba (Argentina) in 1989 and a Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Arizona (Tucson, USA) in 2000. Currently, he is Investigador Principal (Principal Researcher) of the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET) of Argentina. He has archaeological field experience in the US Southwest and the Middle East (Iraq), but for the past 30 years his work has focused on the archaeology and ethnography of the Southern Andes (highlands of SW Bolivia, NW Argentina, and N Chile). His main research interests are the Precolumbian political history of the South Andes (mostly agro-pastoral periods), interregional interaction (both caravan trade and warfare), ethnoarchaeology, and archaeological theory, topics on which he has published extensively (2 single-authored monographs, 5 edited volumes, and 80 journal articles or book chapters).

María Ximena Senatore is a researcher at CONICET (National Council of Scientific and Technological Research), Argentina. She is a professor on historical archaeology and heritage at University of Buenos Aires and National University of Patagonia Austral. She holds a degree in Archaeology (1995, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Ph.D. in History (2003, University of Valladolid, Spain). She is running research projects on Spanish colonialism in South Patagonia and capitalism expansion to Antarctica. She has published papers in several journals such as *International Journal of Historical Archaeology, Historical Archaeology, Polar Record*, and 3 books in Argentina and Brazil.

Andres Zarankin is Professor at the University of Minas Gerais (Brazil). He took his anthropology degree at the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina), as well as his master's degree in architecture. His Ph.D. was completed at Campinas State University (Brazil), while his postdoctoral studies at the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET-Argentina). He has written and edited many books, including *Paredes que domesticam: arqueologia da arquitetura escolar capitalista* (2002); *Arqueologia da sociedade moderna*, along with Maria X. Senatore (2001); *Sed non satiata. Teoría social en la arqueología latinoamericana contemporánea*, along with Félix Acuto (1999); and *Global archaeological theory: contextual voices and contemporary thoughts*, along with Pedro Funari and Emily Stovel (2005). His main research interests include historical archaeology, archaeology of architecture, archaeological theory and Antarctic archaeology.

Social Complexity in Ancient Amerindian Societies: Perspectives from the Brazilian Lowlands

Cristiana Barreto

Models of Social Evolution in the South American Lowlands

Models of social evolution, which rely on typologies for characterizing the degree and structure of inequality and social complexity of past societies, together with its corresponding trait lists of typical features and archaeological signatures, have been largely used in South America to both describe and explain the emergence and decadence of a variety of past social formations, ranging from the Inca empire, to smaller polities which have been classified as tribes, chiefdoms, and states.

Study of the prehistoric South American lowlands has been fatally marked by the longtime assumed absence of complex societies and the eternally restated contrast with Mesoamerican and the Andean complex civilizations, powerful states, and vast empires. Indeed, the view that the lowlands is one part of the world where evolution has maintained societies in a relative state of social egalitarianism has been perpetuated in many ways and has served different philosophical ideals, from eighteenth century colonial romanticism to 1960's Latin American Marxism.

During the last decades, results of archaeological, ethnohistorical, and ethnographic research have gradually changed the long-held view of native South American lowland societies as just simple and egalitarian. The greater time-depth perspective provided by both ethnohistory and archaeology reveals now that such views were strongly inspired by the study of present living native populations highly affected by centuries of contact. Although it is now clear that the present cannot be taken as examples of past social developments, we still know little in terms of how different these past social developments were, especially in terms of social complexity. Furthermore, the little we know seems to challenge previous models based on intensive agriculture and population growth leading to complex forms of social organization.

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On the other hand, the past decades have witnessed a dramatic rethinking of the nature of the so-called egalitarian societies (Flanagan 1989; Paynter and McGuire 1991). Although ethnographers of Brazilian native populations have long recognized that a narrow focus on tribal social organization has masked different kinds of social stratification, hierarchy, and inequality (Basso 1973; Carneiro 1993; Crocker 1979; Gregor 1990; Ireland 1986, 1996; Kracke 1978, 1993; Turner 1992; Werner 1981, 1982), we also know a lot more about the mechanisms which prevent lowland Amerindian societies to turn into stratified states (Clastres 1979; Sztutman 2012; Viveiros de Castro, 2008). Ideas about just what are "complex" and "hierarchical" societies as opposed to "simple" and "egalitarian" have also moved away from traditional key concepts of techno-economic control and social prestige towards other, perhaps subtler, forms of power and control, as well as less visible ways to institutionalize and perpetuate ideological systems (Heckenberger 2005). Even though no strong states or vast empires have been revealed by new data, it is now widely accepted that, at least in some parts of the lowlands, polities of considerable duration, formalized leadership, and hierarchical political structures, sometimes referred to as chiefdoms, have indeed emerged along the lengthy history of South American lowlands (Carneiro 1995; Heckenberger et al. 1999; Neves 1998, 2008a; Porro 1994; Roosevelt 1999; Viveiros de Castro 1996; Whitehead 1996; Schaan 2004).

Some have argued that these chiefly societies were particularly common worldwide in 1492 (Mann 1986) and that in the South American lowlands, as elsewhere, such powers were based on notions rooted in "divine" ancestry values and hierarchical sociality according to which persons were ranked relatively to one another (Heckenberger 2005). However, we are still lacking substantial archaeological evidence to understand the dynamics of power and politics of such chiefdoms.

We do know that when the Portuguese arrived on the coast of Brazil in 1500 they encountered most of the territory occupied by Tupian groups organized into chiefdom-like polities. Ethnohistorians and archaeologists have argued that from all precolonial populations of lowlands Brazil, these, the Tupians from the coast, were probably the only ones in a process of state formation, a process that was brutally interrupted by the arrival of Europeans. Yet, besides living in large, settled, agricultural villages, they apparently lacked the types of rigidly hierarchical social structures commonly attributed to chiefdoms in many other areas (Clastres 1979; Fausto 1992). In this case, we shall never know if state formation was to occur in fact. Nor shall we know whether it was just a matter of time or if social development would have taken another course. We can know, however, about other social developments in the lowlands that were not affected by the conquest, which sequences can be studied as "whole," and about which we can ask ourselves whether and why formalized political and social inequality, hierarchy and complexity ever happened.

From the start, it has to be said that from a large variety of reconstructed archaeological sequences in the Brazilian lowlands, covering a period of at least 12,000 years of cultural developments, in quite diverse natural and historical contexts, the great majority of such developments have not reached high levels of social complexity, in the sense of having many vertical levels of political representation, leadership, and authority. Rather, even among societies which have an extremely hierarchical ethos

in terms of ancestral lineages, as Heckenberger has identified among the different Arawakan societies of the Upper Xingu, power and authority seem to be somewhat loose, circumstantial, and split between chiefs and shamans (Heckenberger 2002, 2005).

Furthermore, the few cases known to have displayed higher levels of social complexity and inequality from either archaeological or ethnohistorical sources seem to correspond to rather brief and ephemeral developments which can indeed be strongly contrasted to the long-lived states and empires of the highlands.

For instance, although very old dates are now known for the early human occupation of Amazonia, beginning as early as 12,000 BP with early foraging groups (Miller 1987; Roosevelt et al. 1996; Oliver 2001), and also relatively early dates for ceramics (up to 7,600 BP, according to Roosevelt et al. 1991 and Roosevelt 1995), large and dense settlements organized into chiefdoms are not believed to have occurred in the region until AD at least 400 AD. Furthermore, some of these late developments seem to display a very short-lived sequence, collapsing even before the European conquest, as is the case of the Marajó chiefdoms (Schaan 2008).

Although empirical research and reconstructed sequences do not allow definite generalizations, for now, asking why more complex societies did not develop in the region, or did not last too long in the region, is as important as explaining how they evolved in the first place. In order to address these questions, one has also to admit that insisting in the contrast with Andean and Mesoamerican states and empires will only contribute to further blurring of past social developments in the South American lowlands, framing it as one, big, uniform whole. Instead, this chapter argues that only careful examination of different developmental sequences within the lowlands and comparison of such sequences within the broad region will deepen understanding of how more complex societies emerged in the past and why they seem to not have lasted for too long.

This chapter presents a brief review of current models explaining the emergence of complex forms of social organization and inequality in the Brazilian lowlands, and reviews recent evidence from three different empirical cases which allows to approach nonegalitarian past societies from previously unexplored perspectives in the archaeology of the region.

From Ecological Determinism to Historical Ecology

Throughout the twentieth century, models of social evolution advanced for the South American lowlands were largely based on environmental factors as either limiting or promoting the local development of more complex societies. Regardless of whether models explain the absence or the presence of societies more hierarchical than the ones presently known in the region, debates have been consistently organized around the twofold argument of whether environmental conditions allowed increasing sedentism and population growth leading to more complex forms of social organization.

Since Steward tagged Amazonian populations under his "tropical forest culture type" (Steward 1946) not only has cultural development in this region been explained mainly on the basis of ecological conditions, but also its implications have been generalized to all of the South American lowlands, including nontropical forested regions.

The "tropical forest culture type" model—now also called the "standard model" (Neves 1998; Viveiros de Castro 1996)—assumed both environmental uniformity across the region and a limited agriculture and protein capture potential to argue that, in Amazonia, environmental conditions led populations to organize into small, autonomous, semisedentary settlements across the entire region. Supposedly, a uniform environment, with an even distribution of resources discouraged any form of competition, economic specialization, and stratification, whereas the low carrying capacity inhibited the more formalized systems of social and political control that usually emerge out of dense population aggregates.

Since the 1950s, this tropical forest culture type model led the few archaeologists working in Amazonia to interpret any indication of more complex societies in the basin as an intrusion from the highlands (Meggers 1954, 1971, 1992, 1995; Meggers and Evans 1957). In order to support this interpretation, attention focused in both environmental studies and cultural diffusion with little concern to improve understanding about the nature of such societies.

While data gathering has been consistently directed to explain larger and denser sites as settlement superposition and to correlate archaeological sequences to environmental episodes, little has been advanced about the scale and organization of settlements believed to belong to more complex societies (such as those of Marajó and Santarém culture complexes, to cite only those admittedly to be more complex than the natural course of local social evolution would allow). Moreover, if both settlement and ceramic attributes indicated some degree of social stratification, other topics, such as labor mobilization, craft specialization, and differential participation in large trading networks, were not subject of archaeological research.

Over the past two decades the "standard model" has been going through a slow and steady decline due to developments in ethnohistory, historical ecology, and archaeology. The contrasting position that has gradually taken shape suggests that, at least in some areas, large, fully sedentary villages were not only once present in Amazonia but also were densely clustered along some riverine areas (Beckerman 1979, 1991; Carneiro 1986, 1995; DeBoer 1981; Denevan 1976, 1996; Heckenberger et al. 1999, 2001; Lathrap 1970, 1977; Myers 1973, 1992; Porro 1994; Roosevelt 1980, 1981, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1999; Whitehead 1994, 1996; Wüst and Barreto 1999; Petersen et al. 2001; Neves et al. 2003; Neves and Petersen 2006; Schaan 2008). Most scholars have again focused on ecological determinants, only this time environmental abundance and high levels of productivity (instead of scarcity) become the key to explain large and dense settlements, and environmental diversity (instead of uniformity) is the key to explain competition leading to population pressure and stratification. While, again, a great deal of research has attempted to pin down the subsistence basis of such dense populations, and to invert the diffusion arrows now indicating the indigenous development of social complexity, little attention was focused on the nature and scale of such complexity.

Lathrap (1970) was certainly the first to question the standard model suggesting that while swidden agriculture did constitute an obstacle to population growth, the floodplain areas of the Middle and Lower Amazon provided not only conditions for a more "efficient" agriculture but also fishing resources that could support relatively dense populations for long periods of time. Arguing for an indigenous development of complex societies in the Middle Amazon, Lathrap inverted the direction of diffusion arrows.

Significant ethnographic data were gathered by Carneiro (1985) among the Kuikuro in the Upper Xingu, an inland interfluvial border of the Amazon basin, suggesting that not only a fishing and manioc subsistence could support larger populations but also that if more complex societies had not developed in this area it was only because no social circumscription and population pressure had yet occurred.

Roosevelt has first argued for the complexity of Amazonian chiefdoms based on the possibility of developing intensive agriculture, and specifically maize, in at least some parts of the Amazon valley, only to revise her model after excavations in Marajó island led her to believe that it was the particularly rich and diverse environmental resources of the regions that allowed for complex chiefdoms to arise out of an economy based on a mixed system of cultivation and foraging, including long-term garden plantings and intensive fishing (Roosevelt 1999, p. 22). Schaan was able to confirm that, indeed, Marajó chiefdoms grew out of intensive fishing, arguing that once local kin groups obtained control over the surplus produced by built fisheries, both population growth and competition fostered the process of increasing hierarchy and social complexity (Schaan 2004, pp. 41–44).

More recently, a third approach to understand the dynamics of political organization, competition and conflict over resources, and its effects on different social organization modes has emerged out of advances in both the historical ecology of tropical forest, focusing on resource management by contemporary indigenous groups, and from archaeological research in sites with "terra preta de indio" (indigenous black earth) and other earth features such as canals, mounds, and pathways. The historical ecology perspective (Balée 1994) shows that indigenous populations not only act on the environment so as to change the local conditions but also occupy and develop adaptive strategies to live on previously transformed places by human activity. These strategies can be seen among very mobile hunter gatherers (Politis 1996; Rival 2002) and sedentary agriculturalists (Balée 1989, 1995; Balée and Moore 1994; Posey 1986).

The archaeological research proposes that much of the diverse sociopolitical dynamics behind dense and continuous occupations of particular sites along the Amazon floodplain were not so much based on either food production such as in intensive agricultural systems, nor on the control of, or access to, specific resources such as fish, but strongly centered on the selection and management of resource diversity and built landscape (Neves 2008a, b; Moraes and Neves 2012).

In sum, in the last decades we have witnessed debates about just which part of Amazonia could have supported larger and denser populations, floodplains or hinterlands; about the feasibility of large populations being supported by shifting manioc systems (Brochado 1980; Carneiro 1983, 1985; Heckenberger 1998b); whether more intense agriculture of more protein-balanced products (i.e., maize) was possible

(Roosevelt 1980, 1981); whether fishing could have been a sufficient source of protein in an otherwise protein-poor environment (Beckerman 1979, 1994; Carneiro 1986; Gross 1975; Schaan 2004, 2008); and that diversification of resources and forest management caused cycles of population growth and political competition, conflict and control over certain territories.

In one way or another, all of these arguments rely on a presumed causal relationship between environmental conditions, be they natural or anthropogenic, population growth, and increasing complexity. While the relationship between the environmental carrying capacity and the presence of large and dense settlements evolving in the Amazonia have been greatly stressed (although without definite results—except for Marajó, we still do not know what these dense settlements lived on), the second part of the twofold argument has been left unexplored. Just how did population growth, or population pressure led to the emergence of more complex forms of social organization? This question will require more than just theories based on old ecological models.

Criticisms on the more general perspectives and causal theories relying either on resource abundance and population density or on population pressure/resource stress to explain the emergence of institutionalized inequality (such as those found in Drennan 1987; Feinman 1995; Upham 1990) seem to have been ignored as debates on Amazonian developments became more and more entangled on competing arguments. Also ignored were criticisms about this kind of environmental determinism being extrapolated to other areas of the lowlands (Moran 1995; Wüst 1994).

Again, other factors, usually considered in the examination of social development and inequality elsewhere, such as social organization, resource control, labor mobilization, craft specialization, trade, and networks (as approached in the volumes edited by Erenreich et al. 1995; and Bacus and Lucero 1999) continue to be largely unexplored in the lowlands. Furthermore, the specific environmental conditions tied up to these revisionist models are narrowed to those of the Amazonian lowlands as for its potential to support large communities, also overlooking conditions of other environmental provinces in the Brazilian lowlands.

The cases presented below are an attempt to add new data to discussions about social development in the lowlands in order to seek alternative models to the mechanical use of the twofold ecological determinants/population growth argument and to improve knowledge about nature and scale of intermediate societies that have evolved in the Brazilian lowlands.

In choosing to present data on cultural developments from three environmentally different regions of Brazil, this chapter proposes to move discussion beyond the strong environmental determinism that has shaped Amazonian archaeology and has extrapolated to the South American lowlands in general, and turn archaeologists attention to factors other than environment to explain different degrees of social complexity reached by native Brazilian societies.

The three cases (Fig. 1) herein presented are (1) the shell mound culture complex of southeastern Brazilian coast, as a strong example of nonagrarian societies that developed out of extremely rich and stable natural resource conditions, and whose

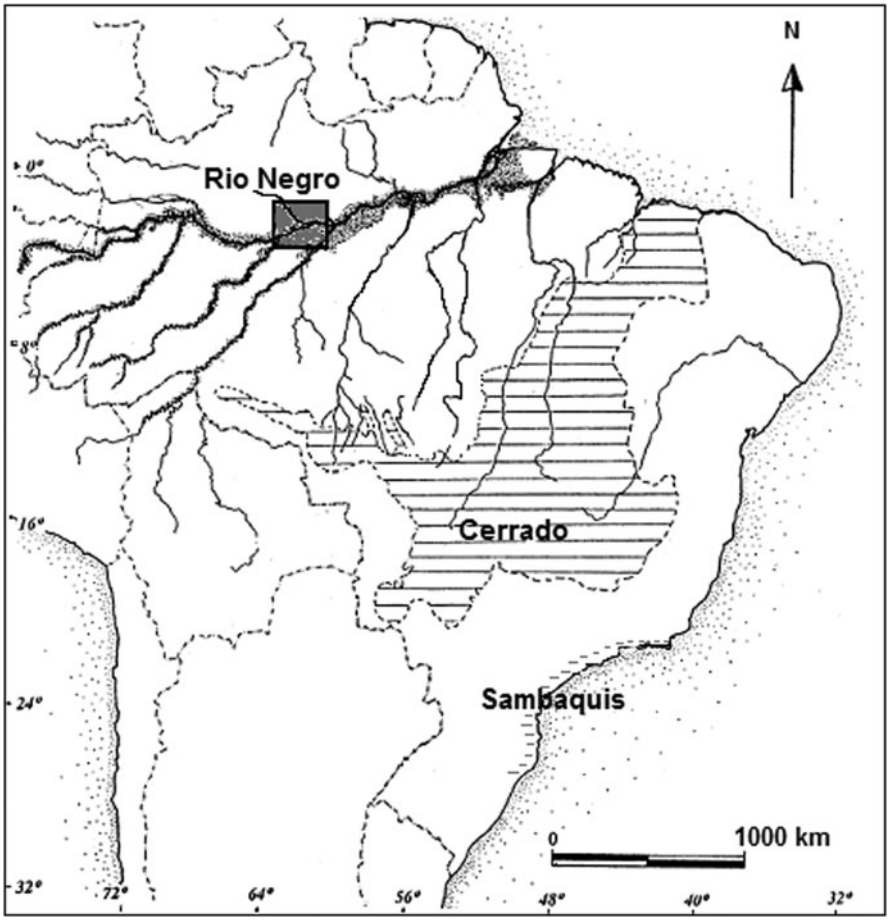

Fig. 1 Map of Brazilian lowlands showing location of the three areas focused in the text: the southeastern coast, where most *sambaqui* sites are located; the cerrado area, where most central Brazilian ring villages are found; and the lower Rio Negro along the Amazonian varzea

monumental structures seem to indicate a certain degree of formalized social inequality (De Blasis et al. 1999); (2) the ring villages of Central Brazil as an example of agrarian societies which evolved out of extremely poor environmental conditions, but nonetheless developed large and dense settlements with highly complex internal village organization, regional hierarchies, labor specialization, and differential access to prestige goods (Wüst and Barreto 1999); and (3) the middle Amazon settlements in the lower Negro river, which seem to not only offer definite evidence against the standard Amazonian model, but also provide new data to explore the diverse nature and scale of different Amazonian chiefdoms (Heckenberger et al. 1999; Neves et al. 2003; Neves 2008a).

The Shell Mounds of Southeastern Brazil

Although shell mounds occur along almost the entire coast of Brazil, the southeastern shore presents a particular situation in that a number of very dense concentrations of this type of site occupy the rich estuarine areas that punctuate an otherwise narrow strip of coast. Protected bays and lagoons edged by vast mangroves provide a high nutrient influx and one of the highest productivity rates among worldwide marine ecosystems. Especially rich in shellfish and fish, these areas have attracted the settling of human groups specialized in shellfish gathering and fishing since at least 6,000 BP (it is possible that older sites have been destroyed by sea level fluctuations). Probably due to expansion of horticulturalist groups from the mainland, these large mounds stopped being built around 2,000 BP and much smaller deposits, including shell mounds, took their place (Fig. 2).

Shell mounds (or *sambaquis*, the Tupian word for it) are the results of intentional accumulation of faunal remains, notably shells, and also of a variety of stone and bone artifacts. These shell mounds vary in size and structure, from small 2-m-high heaps of shell-covered sandy dunes to 400-m-long and 30-m-high impressive mounds containing artifacts, hearths, and burials disposed in a quite complex sequence of layers. In fact, sites larger than 2,000 m^3 are known in the southern shores, where their monumental structures stand out in the open coastal landscape (De Blasis et al. 1999; Gaspar 1998).

For decades, *sambaquis* were believed to be the result of the gradual accumulation of food remains by small, nomadic shellfish-gathering groups and many archaeological indicators of possibly more complex sort of social organization have been overlooked. Although site size, and specially the volume of shells moved to form those mounds were quite impressive and had indeed inspired early interpretations of *sambaquis* as built monuments requiring organized labor mobilization (Duarte 1968), no data had been produced on the rate and nature of mound formation. The same can be said for other indicators of social stratification and inequality such as differentiated burials as seen in burial practices and associated burial paraphernalia, differential access to prestige goods as attested by the distribution of exotic materials; craft specialization as seen in the production and distribution of stone and bone sculptures; and site hierarchies as site spatial distribution and size variability suggest. Instead, a stress on ecological determinants had led to interpret faunal remains exclusively as food remains and to a chronological ordering of sites into an evolutionary scale in which the gathering of mollusks predominated first and later more intensive fishing substituted for it just before *sambaquis* stopped being built (Dias 1972; Mendonça de Souza 1981; Perota 1974; Lima 1991). This ordering of sites inspired archaeologists to think that after a 4,000-year-long period of shell-mound building in estuarine areas, population growth caused depletion of mollusk banks and led, first, to a diversification of gathered species (explaining the remains of less nutritious shellfish species in mounds), and second, to an increase and specialization in fishing, explaining why shell mounds became less imposing in size and finally stopped being built (see Figuti 1993 for a review).

Fig. 2 Typical landscape of Santa Catarina coast showing a complex of *sambaqui* sites. (Photo: Paulo De Blasis)

This interpretation, a typical example of how the Amazonian "standard model" has been extended in its deterministic premises to a quite different context, has now started to be revised in the light of new data gathered by projects concerned with site formation, paleonutrition, site distribution, and a more detailed approach to material culture.

Undergoing excavations of sites by these new projects revealed first that fishing was important ever since the initial occupation of *sambaquis* and that mollusks acted as an efficient but only complementary food resource (Figuti 1991, 1993, 1997; Figuti and Klökler 1996). Indeed, paleonutrition studies reveal that this diet based on fish has gone unchanged for sequences as long as 4,000 years. This new data, together with a previously underlooked industry of fishing and fish processing artifacts, suggest that such populations can no longer be seen as wandering bands of nomadic shellfish gatherers, but rather as long-lived fishing communities. Furthermore, it invalidates previous models of evolution based on population growth and food depletion.

Secondly, site formation studies also reveal that most shell remains are not food remains. Instead, layers of oysters and other shellfish had been rapidly built as to form dry platforms over mangrove swamps, a fact that changes the view of *sambaquis* as gradually built trash mounds into rapidly and intentionally built monumental structures (De Blasis et al. 1999). Researchers (Fish et al. 2001; Gaspar 1996; Gaspar and De Blasis 1992) have associated shell platforms found over burials to funeral rituals, including intensive feasting, and location and distribution of postholes, hearths, and covering burial platforms indicate numerous rapid episodes of intensive building and enlargement of funerary structures. The building of platforms measuring more than 80,000 m^2 and 2 m thick, over a quick period of time, seem to have required organized suprakin labor mobilization (De Blasis et al. 1999; Fig. 3).

In the selected large mounds recently studied, burial activity is now known to have been extremely intense, suggesting a specialized use of such mounds as communal

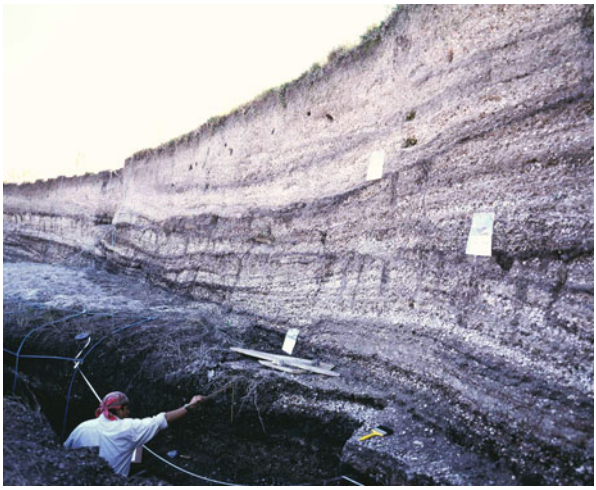

Fig. 3 Excavation profile of a large *sambaqui* showing the different archaeological layers. (Photo: Fernando Chaves)

cemeteries and offering some clues for estimating population density. One large *sambaqui* (Jabuticabeira II) is estimated to have ca. 43,000 buried individuals over an estimated period of 400 years, while another (Cabeçuda) is estimated to have more than 50,000 individuals. Preliminary estimates of number of buried individuals per 25-year period generations are surprisingly high and indicate communities with an unexpected high population density (Fish et al. 2001; De Blasis et al. 1999).

Other smaller mounds seem to have served as both residential and funerary areas, with individuals buried under their houses, which led scholars to hypothesize some sort of privileged status for those ritually buried in the large cemeteries (De Blasis et al. 1999). The burials seem to provide the strongest evidence of social inequality among *sambaqui* people: while some individual burials are simpler, others display rich and diversified paraphernalia such as the elaborated and rare stone and bone sculptures.

The degree of social differentiation and inequality that *sambaqui* builders have reached and how this evolved along their developmental sequence have yet to be determined and much has to be done to elucidate the forms of labor mobilization involved in their construction, and what the observed elaboration of burial structures and intensification of rituals may mean in terms of formalizing social inequality and complexity. In other words, whether *sambaqui* culture will enter the hall of the few nonagricultural societies to display a relatively high, formalized degree of social inequality, only further research will tell.

The point we want to make with this case is that the stress on environmental variables, as either transposing the limiting-carrying capacity model from Amazonia or viewing resource abundance as a stability maintenance factor, tended to mask important indicators of the nature of *sambaqui* social organization. Alternative approaches focusing on the nature of such sites (how they were built, for which purposes, etc.) and their scale (how big they are, how complex are internal structures, how labor

demanding they are, etc.) will probably be more enlightening to understand *sambaqui* social evolution than ecological deterministic approaches limited to explain its development in terms of subsistence practices, population growth, and carrying capacities.

The Ring Villages of Central Brazil

The ring villages of Central Brazil are relatively large settlements that have rapidly spread across this immense region of the Brazilian Plateau around 800 AD. These villages, in their circular, oval, or horseshoe arrangements of houses around a central patio, correspond to a pattern of village organization still present in Central Brazil among most Ge and Bororo speaking groups.

Ethnographic studies of these groups (in a context already highly affected by direct contact with white colonizers) first led scholars to classify them as hunter/gatherer marginal populations confined to the poorer and drier lands of plateaus that separate the Amazon basin from other southern drainages. Indeed, the distribution of these archaeological villages correspond to the savanna like "cerrado" and "caatinga" ecological provinces of Brazil where agriculture conditions are limited by both poor nutrient soils and long dry seasons. This marginal status drew the attention of archaeologists away from Central Brazil, especially those interested in studying more complex societies.

However, surviving Central Brazilian groups did attract the attention of early ethnographers for both the large size of their settlements (compared to the small tropical forest villages) and the unusual complexity of village organization as witnessed by a high number of social institutions, residential rules, corporate groups, and rituals (Nimuendajú 1939, 1942, 1946; Levi-Strauss 1952; Lowie 1949).

But, if both size and complexity were considered anomalous, their nonstratified, egalitarian status was not questioned. On the contrary, their typical village layout was also taken to express the dichotomy between a very complex social system and the egalitarian tribal structure. Houses (the households of extended families) are laid out along the circle as to express many of the social partitions to which residents belong (such as moieties, clans, and lineages), but at the same time all houses have equal access to the central plaza where most public, ceremonial activities take place and where most decisions about the village are taken (Maybury-Lewis 1979; Costa and Malhano 1986; Barreto 2011).

Recent ethnography on social and political organization of Central Brazilian groups now argues that inequality is latent to the typical form of village organization of Central Brazilian groups (even seeing the central plaza as an arena of political control), and that social hierarchies are at the essence of the Central Brazilian ethos (Crocker 1979; Heckenberger 1998a, 2005; Ireland 1996; Turner 1992; Werner 1981, 1982). However, most studies touching on the dialectics of control and the nature of chiefly power tend to agree that the critical transition from informal and circumstantial forms of control into institutionalized, hereditary systems of power

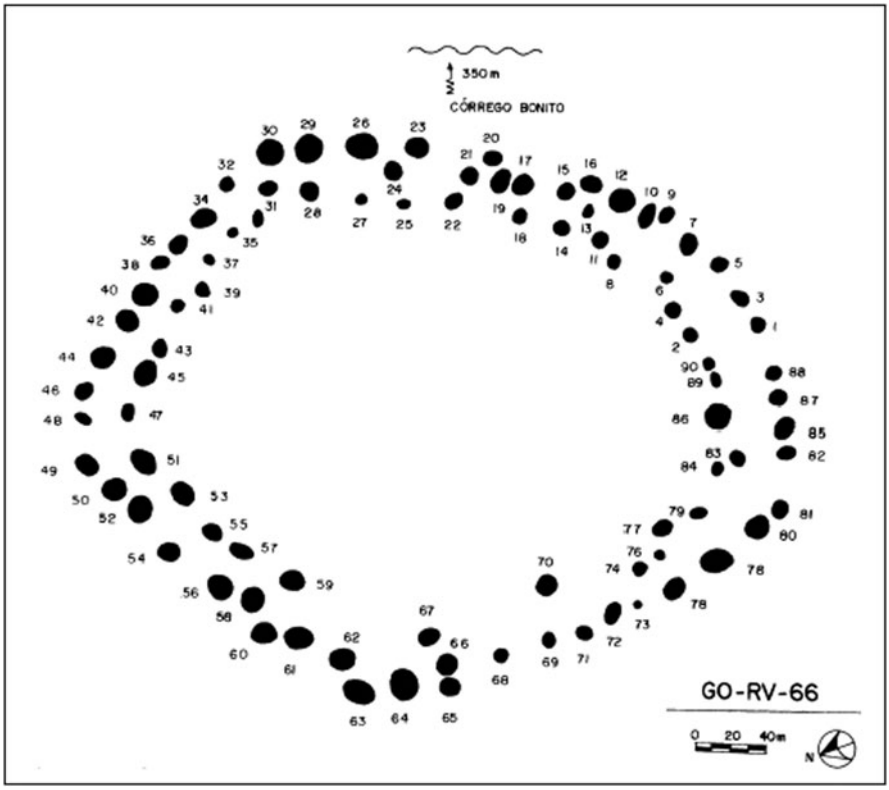

Fig. 4 Plan of site GO-RV-66, one of the largest archaeological villages in Central Brazil with a total of ninety houses. (From Wüst and Barreto 1999)

was not reached among these groups for no other reason than the low population densities and relatively high degree of mobility they display today (Spencer 1994; Werner 1982).

Archaeological research, with a different time depth perspective, now provides a quite different scenario for explaining both social complexity and hierarchical structures among Central Brazilian groups. First, it is now clear that from 800 AD onwards, throughout Central Brazil, population was organized into numerous, large, fully sedentary, agricultural villages despite poor conditions for agriculture (Fig. 4). Archaeological ceramics suggest varied use of processed and stored manioc and maize products that could have supported dense settlements year round. Population estimates based on number of houses per village and ethnographic data reveal that communities as large as 2,000 people organized in villages formed by several rings of houses existed in the past (Barreto 1996; Wüst 1990; Wüst and Barreto 1999; Wüst and Carvalho 1996). Thus, models based on present village sizes and mobility do not hold for the past.

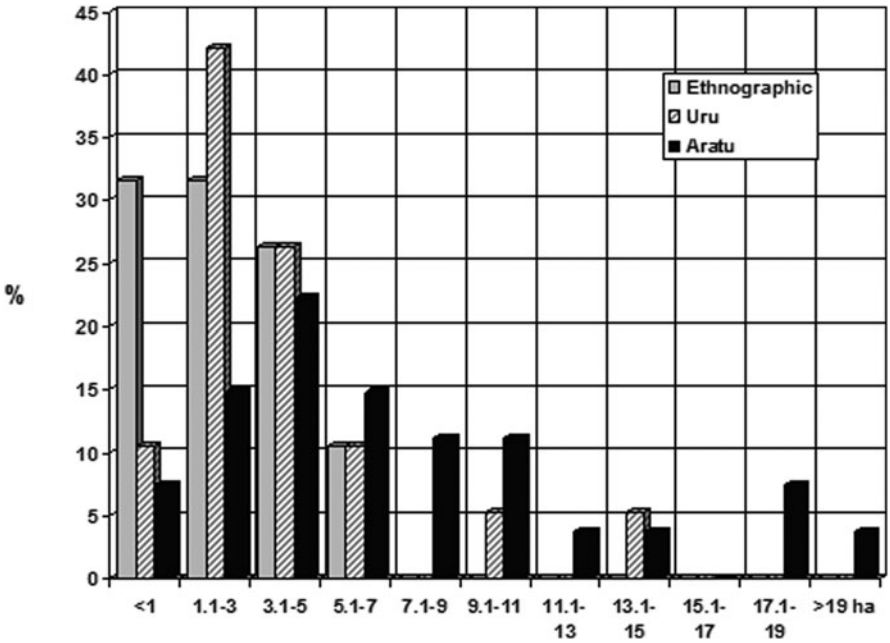

Fig. 5 Graph of distribution of number of villages (in %) by village area (in hectares) from a total of 65 surveyed ethnographic and archaeological ring villages (Uru and Aratu traditions) known in Central Brazil. (From Wüst and Barreto 1999)

Second, Central Brazilian archaeological sequences suggest that increasing population density was paralleled by a gradual process of hierarchization among villages, revealed by differentiation in both village size and access to exotic materials (Wüst 1990; Wüst and Barreto 1999). These data are compatible with village histories reconstructed through both archaeology and ethnography which indicate that several villages were indeed subordinated to one single leader and that villages where rituals and festivities were more frequent were indeed larger in size (Viertler 1976; Wüst 1994; Fig. 5).

As for internal village organization, at least two well-studied sites display both exotic ceramics and remains of activities related to processing of manioc into flour and bread limited to only some of the households (Wüst 1990; Wüst and Barreto 1999). Differences in these and other materials among households have also been interpreted by researchers in terms of production of surplus by very few households (Wüst and Carvalho 1996).

Finally, regional settlement pattern studies have registered site size ranking, as mentioned above, but of a small magnitude, with larger sites being only twice or three times the smaller ones. This ranking is strongly correlated with the distribution of what seem to be ethnically diverse materials. This evidence coupled with some indicators of warfare and of frequent village merging and fissioning led researchers to speculate about loose (and perhaps ephemeral) horizontal settlement hierarchies

based on different regional arrangements, such as warfare alliances, supravillage lineage solidarity, and trade networks, different than the concentration of power in strong vertical hierarchies as thought for Amazonian chiefdoms (Wüst and Barreto 1999).

Implications of this data for the Amazonian "standard model" and ecological models are twofold. First, the fact that large communities organized in complex social patterns evolved in an environment considered even poorer than both riverine and *terra firme* Amazonia contradicts hypotheses of environmental limitation for cultural developments in the lowlands. Second, it shows that hierarchical structures observed today among native Brazilians might reflect patterns of stronger social differentiation and inequality in the past that may indeed have been of a different nature.

The Central Brazil case is also another example of how a model based exclusively on environmental conditions for population growth cannot explain emergence of more complex forms of social organization and inequality. Particularly in this case, it seems that population grouping into tightly interacting communities (villages) has more important organizational implications than the dynamics of population growth within specific environmental conditions (as it has been stressed for Amazonia). Yet, in Central Brazil, estimates for even the largest village fall above the "magic number" of $2{,}500 \pm 500$ people community, usually considered to be a turning point requiring higher levels of social complexity (Feinman 1995, p. 261).

This does not imply going back to former arguments that Central Brazilian societies are not complex because they are small, but rather that Central Brazilian villages illustrate the need for new approaches concerning the role of population in organizational change (for instance along the lines suggested by Drennan 1987 and Feinman 1995) in order to better discriminate the critical and causal variables of different demographic dynamics.

The Central Amazon Settlements

If both shell mounds and ring villages seem to represent borderline cases in which only further research will tell whether and to which degree social/political hierarchies and economic inequality were institutionalized at some point in the past, there has been increasing agreement that, at least in some areas of riverine Amazonia, large and dense settlements organized into well-established long-lived chiefdoms did exist.

Much of the data available has come from the Central Amazon Project coordinated by Eduardo Neves since 1995, which originally focused in the area of confluence of the Negro and Solimões rivers. First, regional surveys have produced a first scenario for settlement variability based on black earth (*terra preta*) extensions (Neves et al. 2003; Neves and Petersen 2006). The distribution of small- and medium-sized sites (ranging from 2 to 10 ha) and a few large sites (some with over 30 ha) in the Manaus area give us now an idea of the magnitude of settlement size ranking. What this settlement variability means in terms of settlement hierarchies and centralization of

power is still to be explored. However, it confirms the existence of large and dense settlements that could be part of a chiefdom system. Comparisons with other areas such as Central Brazil does seem to suggest that here not only more stable paramount villages were in order, but also that these places were successively occupied by different groups along the history of the area. Second, closer examination of one of these large villages, reveals a well-structured plan displaying earthworks (ditches, terraces, and mounds) organized around a large central plaza (of approximately 450 × 100 m). Radiocarbon dates also indicate that such structural elaboration of the site was gradually built over a long period of time (more than 1,000 years) and that fixed occupation and constant additions started at least as early as 150 AD.

The significance of these structural features is not yet fully understood, but initial interpretations based on distribution of archaeological materials such as prestige items and more elaborated goods have led researchers to define special activities linked to communal ritual and public affairs concentrated near the village center and plaza, and to interpret the central plaza as a "politico-religious center of community life" surrounded by special residential areas for "limited segments of society"(Heckenberger et al.1999, p. 21). It is unclear whether such village layout could be generalized as a pattern of paramount villages. Further data analysis on settlement pattern in this area will be crucial to start defining the nature of concentration of power, social structures, and scale of settlement hierarchies in Amazonia.

More interesting, however, is the variability found in the area concerning the size, composition, and formation rate of sites. Other large sites, such as the multicomponent site of Lago Grande (Neves and Petersen 2006), show different rates of formation corresponding to different phases of occupation, and perhaps different groups. From around 400 AD till 900 AD, villages with central plazas and mounds display thick layers of *terra preta*, correlated with a dramatic increase in site size and density, signaling population increase and possibly multiethnic occupations (Neves 2008a; Moraes and Neves 2012). These thick and dense sites, related to Manacapuru and Paradão ceramic complexes, seem to have been formed in only a few decades, indicating a peak of occupation lasting about 500 years, only to be followed by a rapid abandonment of the site, apparently related to warfare and defense activities, and in some cases reoccupation, by groups related to the Amazonian polychrome tradition. This subsequent occupation is organized around much smaller areas during shorter periods of time.

These data bring back the question of reoccupation of sites as formerly proposed by Meggers to explain large-sized, multicomponential settlements. Only here, it is clear that reoccupation occurs within another timing and scale, i.e., as processes of rapid and intensive reallocation of very dense populations.

Other than the formation of thick layers of *terra preta*, subtler forms of landscape transformation include the constructions of funerary mounds, such as at the Hatahara site, another large multicomponential site excavated in the area, reaching an extension of 16 ha. Here, a great number of mounds built over a relatively short period of time seems to indicate that mound building occurred into few but intensive episodes, showing again multiple and short periods of dense occupation and transformation of the landscape (Neves and Petersen 2006; Machado 2003).

The sudden processes of site formation and site abandonment have led archaeologists to suggest "that chiefdoms in the Central Amazon were cyclical or centrifugal social formations, characterized by alternate processes of centralization and decentralization. Centralization, in the archaeological record of the Central Amazon, would be seen through the occupation of very large sites, some of them several hectares wide. Decentralization, on the other hand, would be verified in the sudden abandonment of some of those large sites" (Neves and Petersen 2006, p. 301).

While site abandonment in the Amazon has been formerly explained as the result of adaptive problems (Meggers 1996), the new data seem to point to far more complex processes due to competition and political conflict, causing frequent settlement fractioning. "Such conflicts would emerge from a constant tension between, at one hand, centralizing centripetal hierarchical ideologies—verified in the archaeological record in, for instance, labor mobilization in mound building activities—and, at the other hand, centrifugal pulverized and uncontrollable household-based productive units" (Neves and Petersen 2006, p. 302).

In conclusion, these data seem to contradict models of Amazonian cultural development as shaped by ecological constraints and which tend to explain large settlements in the region as a consequence of repeated occupations of favored locations (Meggers 1990; Miller 1992). Although this view had already been questioned, neither settlement pattern nor site structure data were yet available, limiting scrutiny to reviews of ceramic seriations which inspired previous interpretations on settlement sizes and mobility (DeBoer et al. 1996; Heckenberger et al. 2001).

Because it specifies settlement variability and organization, these different kind of data can also provide the important link to the second part of the twofold argument that relates conditions for development of dense and large settlements, and the existence of such settlements to higher degrees of social complexity and inequality.

Within the present context of models of social evolution in Amazonia, whether increased population density can be seen as a causal variable in changing complexity in Amazonia (be it as in Carneiro's model where competition for land leads to more centralized organization, or be it in Roosevelt's model where the need for more intense use of land brings more complex social organization), the data from lower Negro river can throw new light on the role of population in organizational changes.

Furthermore, looking at variability in scale and nature of such settlements in Amazonia will probably also open up interpretation for less monocausal models to include other factors such as specialized production, labor mobilization, warfare and regional networks in the analysis of societal hierarchies and centralized polities as described in the ethnohistorical literature.

Finally, the Central Amazon data also show that even though places were, in fact, being reoccupied by successive and distinct human groups attracted by the managed landscape favoring diversity of resources, appropriation of space and resources were done in culturally distinct ways.

Conclusion

Studies of the three cases presented above, southern coastal shell mounds, Central Brazil ring villages, and Central Amazon settlements, have yet to be refined in terms of definite developmental sequences from which one can infer either the exact direction of changes towards social hierarchy and inequality or the degree to which these were formalized in the past. However, in the three cases, it is the more direct focus on the reconstruction of settlement size, organization, and their specific developmental sequences which allow an initial evaluation of the longtime assumed relationship between large, dense population aggregates and social complexity and inequality.

They show that determining the ecological basis from which such societies evolved is certainly crucial, but not sufficient to understand the development of social differentiation and inequality in the South American lowlands. Looking at how economies and labor were organized in diverse environmental conditions can help to discern precisely the validity of and specify the particular circumstances in which the longtime assumed relationship between ecological conditions, sedentism/population growth, and societal change apply within the broad region. In particular, they point to the need to define the role of population (and the relevance of different demographic variables) to explain changes towards more complex societies.

The data presented above also point to a few factors whose role in the direction of increasing social complexity and formalizing inequality should be considered in further research, such as labor mobilization as strategies of emerging political control, the intensification of rituals as shaping social hierarchies and leadership, and the formation of supralocal spheres of interaction (through trade, marriage, warfare alliances) as the basis for control over prestige goods and wealth.

Finally, the three cases presented above illustrate distinct pathways to perhaps equally distinct degrees of social complexity and centralization of power and that not one generalizing model for the broad region can be sustained. It is the comparison of specific sequences within the region, and the resulting broad parallels and contrasts that will deepen understanding of how social complexity and inequality has emerged in the region.

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Blind Men and an Elephant: Exchange Systems and Sociopolitical Organizations in the Orinoco Basin and Neighboring Areas in Pre-Hispanic Times

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Introduction

One of the most fruitful hypotheses generated in recent years by the Venezuelan anthropological community has been the so-called *System of Orinoco Regional Interdependence*. From Morey's (1975) original formulation, the team lead by Arvelo-Jiménez has expanded this hypothesis, proposing that the system was representative of an old and extended "Amazonian culture matrix" characterized, among other elements, by political horizontality and ecological complementariness. This formulation has deep implications for the understanding of the aboriginal history in the Orinoco Basin and its adjacent regions; acknowledging this fact, several works have revised, expanded, or criticized diverse aspects from the initial proposal. Nowadays the debate continues regarding the nature, size, and organization of such system, and when, how, and why was integrated. An interesting aspect in this controversy has to do with the complexity and diversity of the political organizations that integrated the system and their consequences to understand its extension and structure: How the system(s) was(were) structured during the Pre-Hispanic epoch? What was the relation between the political organizations in the area and the system's size and complexity? In order to contribute to the solution of these questions, this chapter proposes a critical revision of the main inputs and discussions made to this hypothesis, paying particular attention to the sociopolitical organizations in the area.

The Regional Exchange Systems: Definitions and Controversies

Some time ago, several researchers had detected data from historical sources evidencing the existence of long-distance exchange networks, connecting regions very far to each other as the Colombian and Venezuelan Llanos, Orinoco, Guiana, and

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Trinidad (e.g., Acosta Saignes 1946; Salas 1971, pp. 55–57; Arellano 1982, p. 138). But it was not until 1975 when Morey and Morey systematized an abundant body of published data for the Colombian and Venezuelan Llanos region. This region was conceived as an integrated whole by societies with economic activities totally or partially specialized because of different ecological settings. According to this proposal, the connection between different environments by means of exchange networks played a critical role in the development of tribal specialization. This mutual dependency prevented the development of social inequalities; reciprocity was the norm instead. There were different kinds of social organization, but not well developed, hence the tribal social formations were predominant (Morey 1975, 1976; Morey and Morey 1975).

At the end of the 1970s, Arvelo-Jiménez and others expanded and deepened these hypotheses, resulting in the formulation of the *System of Orinoco Regional Interdependence* (Arvelo-Jiménez et al. 1989; Arvelo-Jiménez and Biord 1994). These researchers conceived this system as an integration level above the local or ethnic and as an analytical tool for interethnic relations; it was proposed that the system did not imply loss of local political autonomy nor the cultural diversity integrated by different ethnicities; and the Orinoquian ethnic groups were characterized as small, disperse, and politically decentralized. The mechanisms of interethnic articulation, including war, did not lead to the political supremacy of any ethnic group, serving instead to promote ecological complementariness, cultural diversity, and conflict management. The economy of these societies was characterized by simple reproduction of necessary existence conditions; therefore, the modest surplus generated was not directed toward accumulation or economic specialization but to reinforce political links between societies with a similar sociopolitical level. Additionally, the excessive importance given to the commercial aspects of the system was criticized.

> . . . to characterize the multiple articulation mechanisms of Orinoquian societies as eminently commercial is a distortion which privileges and put out of context commerce itself. A revision made to common ethnographical data from these societies allowed us to discern inclusive cultural configurations. . . which indicates the true role and place of commercial relations within a Regional or Interethnic System. (Arvelo-Jiménez et al. 1989, p. 160)

Lastly, it was pointed out that the system was altered by biological, economical, and sociopolitical changes, which are characteristics of the implantation process of the colonial society, as well by the implantation of a new economic rationality that contradicted the indigenous own system.[1]

A first attempt to question the extension and the decentralized character of the system was the analysis made by Zucchi and Gassón (2002), which started from a basic set of variables (magnitude, diversity, size, direction, symmetry, centralization, complexity, and chronology) that constitute the exchange systems' structural characteristics, giving elements that allowed to model the circuits, define its variation patterns through time and space, and facilitate the comparison (Plog 1977,

[1] This approach was used by several authors for the study of historical linguistics problems and for the analyses of varied scope exchange systems in the Llanos and Eastern Venezuela (e.g., Morales 1979, 1990; Morales and Arvelo-Jiménez 1981; Biord 1985; González 1986; Biord et al. 1989).

pp. 129–130). As Morey and Morey (1975) pointed out, even the earliest documents described a situation altered by the impact of the colonial society—although it adapted and took advantage of the indigenous exchange system, it generated deep changes in the circuits' extension, the participants' role, and the exchanged goods. It is possible that there was not just one exchange system but several of them that were integrated later as a result of the colonial situation.

The participation of groups in the exchange systems was not egalitarian in all cases, at least not during the contact epoch. The regional systems were frequently located around societies with integration levels above the autonomous village, even though the connection between systems happened in a more diffuse way. The data since the end of the sixteenth century to the republican epoch indicates important changes in the extension, content, complexity, and components of the exchange system, which may be summarized as follows:

- A trend, escalating toward centralization and expansion of the exchange network.
- Increasing changes in its content, implying the substitution of several aboriginal objects for products like food, raw materials, gold, and pearls, thus reflecting the needs and economic orientation of the early moments of the conquest. The exchange content changed soon toward the quest for slave workforce in exchange for European manufactured goods, specially iron artifacts, guns, and alcoholic beverages, hence reflecting one more time, the changes implanted by the colonial society's economy.
- Emergence of ethnic groups with greater political centralization and new military skills, which allowed controlling the exchange relations in vast sectors in the Orinoco River.
- An even more competitive and aggressive relation between ethnic groups for the control of European goods' sources, and therefore, an even more dependency for western goods[2] (Zucchi and Gassón 2002).

In 1991, Amodio continued studying the cultural consequences of exchange from written and archaeological sources, with special attention to the Caribbean area. According to Amodio, in northern South America, it is possible to differentiate several regions where indigenous populations integrate systems of structured interrelations, including conflict and war, and where goods exchange was the base for cultural interdependency.[3]

In order to examine the so-called Carib-Arawak system, a theoretical model was elaborated, which may be summarized as follows: during the pre-Hispanic epoch, some indigenous groups maintained articulated systems of interethnic relations that

[2] Kipp and Schortman (1989, p. 370) established that when exchange goods could be found at the market rather than through exchange between elites the chiefdoms' power relied increasingly on economic and political exploitation.

[3] According to Amodio (1997, p. 57), these systems were as follows: (1) Carib-Arawak, which included Venezuela's eastern coast and Caribbean islands; (2) Middle-Orinoquian, connecting the coast islands system with Amazonian and Guyana's savannas systems; (3) Amazonian, integrated by the Upper Orinoco regions; (4) Guyana, which included groups from Gran Sabana, and basins of Branco and Essequibo rivers; and (5) Andean, integrated by groups from the piedmont and Lake Maracaibo's southern shore.

included all the cultural aspects and produced imposition and cultural appropriation processes, resulting in syncretic cultures and common cultural horizons. These systems had two essential functions: to regulate the flow of resources distribution and to contribute on the constitution of ethnic identities; in their interior, there was an interethnic division of labor. The biggest systems worked through related subsystems reproducing some structural characteristics of the macrosystem, while the majority of their particular characteristics where kept. The "power problem" was solved at different integration levels and several areas of society. At the tribal level, the problem regarding the cultural resources control was solved in an autonomous way, whereas at the intertribal level, it was done through mechanism such as alliances, wars, and exchanges. Preliminarily, it was argued that the domination problem was relative to the "success" of the cultural resources introduced by a group into the system and to the "force" developed by them in order to impose their decisions (Amodio 1991, p. 579). There were exchange or reciprocal influence microsystems and micro- and macrosystems controlled by a single group, either by autonomous production of new characteristics or by the influence of the implanted colonial society.

Amodio's contribution is important because he proposed methodological tools to interpret the regional circuits' characteristics, going beyond the description of their characteristics; besides, he proposed hypotheses that can be examined with archaeological and historical data about the cultural consequences from exchange between pre-Hispanic societies in the area. Thus, it was argued about the cultural consequences from contact between different societies that inhabited a single region as the formation process of common languages and multilingualism, similarities in pottery, and existence of pluriethnic families as a product of the connection between subsystems; this phenomena brought, at the same time, constant processes of ethnic reaffirmation (Amodio 1991, p. 606).

However, the understanding of how political inequality influenced these cultural processes and how the phenomena was affected by the generic way was discussed; a study on actors and specific mechanisms was more necessary than on terms like "dominion problem," "cultural resources success," "forces," or "influences." This study was carried out by Langebaek, who applied the world-system approach [4] in order to describe the relations between Muisca societies from the eastern Andes and those that inhabited the eastern Llanos of Colombia during the sixteenth century (Langebaek 1991, 1992, 1995). Langebaek considered Muisca chiefdom as a "core" with a more productive economic system than that of the lowlands, which would be the "periphery" integrated into the Muisca economy (Fig. 1). This uneven commerce played an important role in the development of Muisca society. Center and periphery interact in such a way that one cannot be understood without the other. The asymmetrical exchange networks were based on the existence of these differences and, at the same time, their nourishment (Langebaek 1992, pp. 16, 214):

[4] The world-system theory posits that systems should be seen as processes instead of structures and that their constitutive units can be conceived as formed and reformed by relations between them; it is characterized, furthermore, by its eminently geographic approach, the use of multiple levels of analysis, and its evolutive and multilineal vision (Peregrine 1996, pp. 5–6).

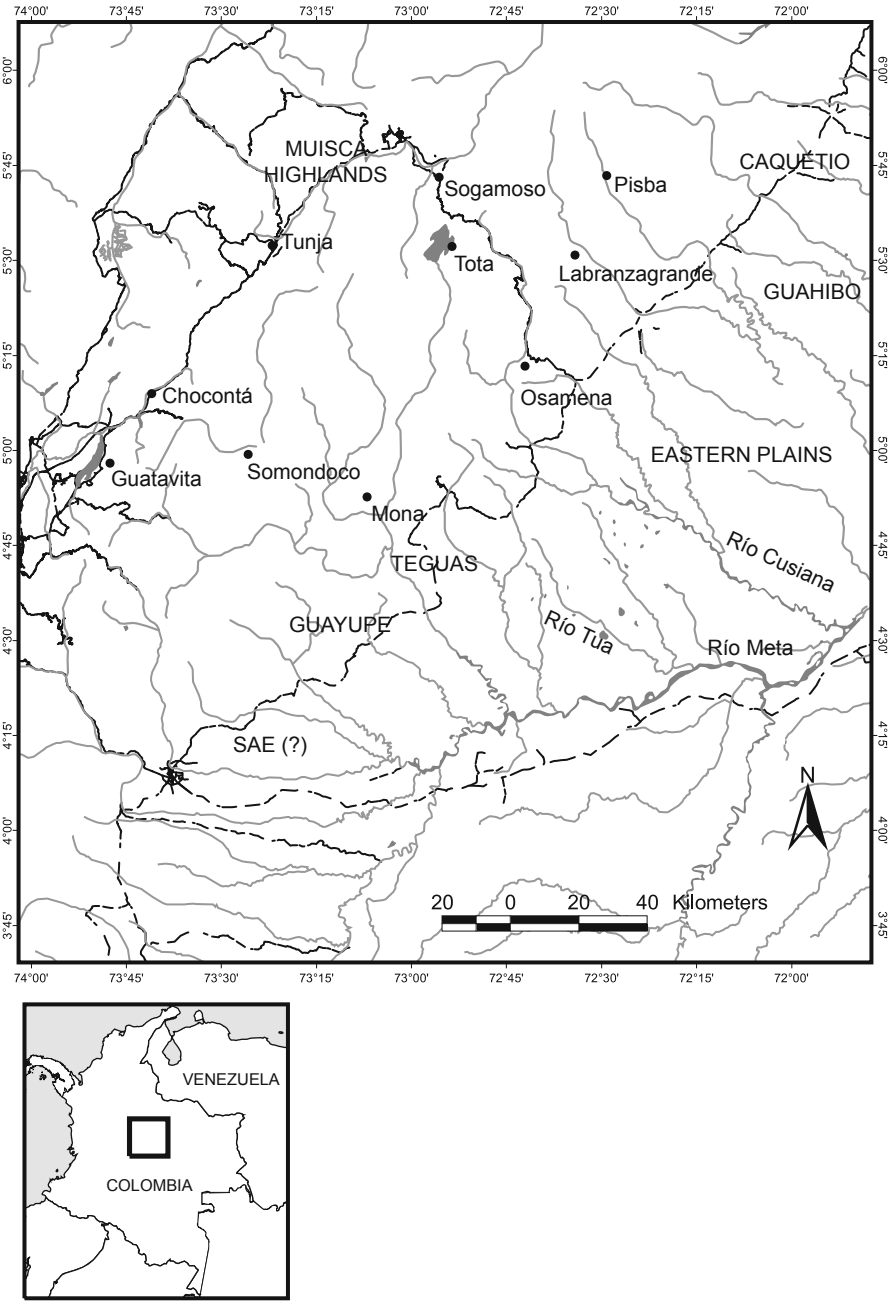

Fig. 1 Cundiboyacense high plateau and piedmont of the eastern Llanos of Colombia, with approximate location of Muisca highlands and Caquetio, Guahibo(?), Teguas, Guayupe, and Sae(?) groups. (After Langebaek 1991, p. 328)

> The social interaction process played an important role on the development of labor division within the most complex societies. The Andean societies as cores (complex chiefdoms) and the periphery in the lowlands (local communities) interacted economically in such a way that the former produced elaborated objects that required the existence of specialists, while the latter provided raw materials. Developed chiefdoms and local communities in northern South America aspired to dominate diverse ecologies in order to gain continuous access to food resources. Long distance circulation was limited by the transport systems' deficiencies and by distance; for this reason the circulation of products only had true importance when distance between cores and peripheries was reduced, and when significant volumes of raw materials versus finished items went from one region to another in a regular basis. The development of complex chiefdoms based on semiculture was favored by the existence of a close periphery in two particular areas: Eastern Andes and Santa Marta's Sierra Nevada.

Although the proposed model was limited to the piedmont and llanos around the Cundiboyacense plateau, Langebaek extended it to understand the nature of social evolution in northern South America, agreeing with Arvelo-Jiménez's and others' arguments regarding the low complexity level of societies located at the Orinoco's lowlands. According to this argument, the focal point of the processes leading to economical and political complexity toward the end of the pre-Hispanic epoch moved from the lowlands to the highlands in northeastern Colombia, inhabited by ethnic groups with a remarkable level of political complexity, such as Muisca and Lache from eastern Andes and Kogui from Santa Marta's Sierra Nevada (Langebaek 1992, pp. 75–76). Although Langebaek acknowledged other researchers' opinions that indicate that lowlands from eastern Colombia and Venezuela were suitable for stable and numerous populations with a complexity level formerly denied, in his opinion, in 1992, the available data did not allow to go further (Langebaek 1992, pp. 84).

Shortly after, Whitehead and Vidal offered a different proposal. According to Whitehead (1994), between the Amazon and Orinoco rivers toward the year 1500 there were *Amerindian economic and political macrosystem*s (also called multiethnic confederations or multiethnic chiefdoms), characterized by a notable sociocultural and political complexity that emerged thanks to the integration of different ethnic units. Following the same line of thought and on the basis of ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and oral tradition data, Vidal (1993, p. 36, 1999) restructured this proposal to document the history of Baré and other groups from the upper Orinoco and adjacent areas' ancestors. For Vidal, the indigenous populations were grouped together in intra- and interregional confederations that articulated populations from riverine and interfluvial areas. These social networks were sustained by complex religious systems (like Kuwé or Kuway religion and males secret societies), economic specialization, and the goods and wedding alliances exchange system (Vidal 1993, p. 34, 2000, pp. 655–656). Vidal identified and described the characteristics from the 11 main macrosystems during the contact epoch: Manoa, Gran Airico, Huyapari, Aruaki, Tapajoso, Caripuna, Conori, Macureguarai, Oniguayal, Machiparo, and Paricora. These macrosystems were distributed in neighboring regions that occupied a vast space located between the Orinoco and Amazon rivers (Fig. 2). Although its territory size could vary, it had an integration level above the village and the regional settlement pattern. These interregional patterns were the reflection of elaborated political structures in which the command could form a politic, military, or religious origin or

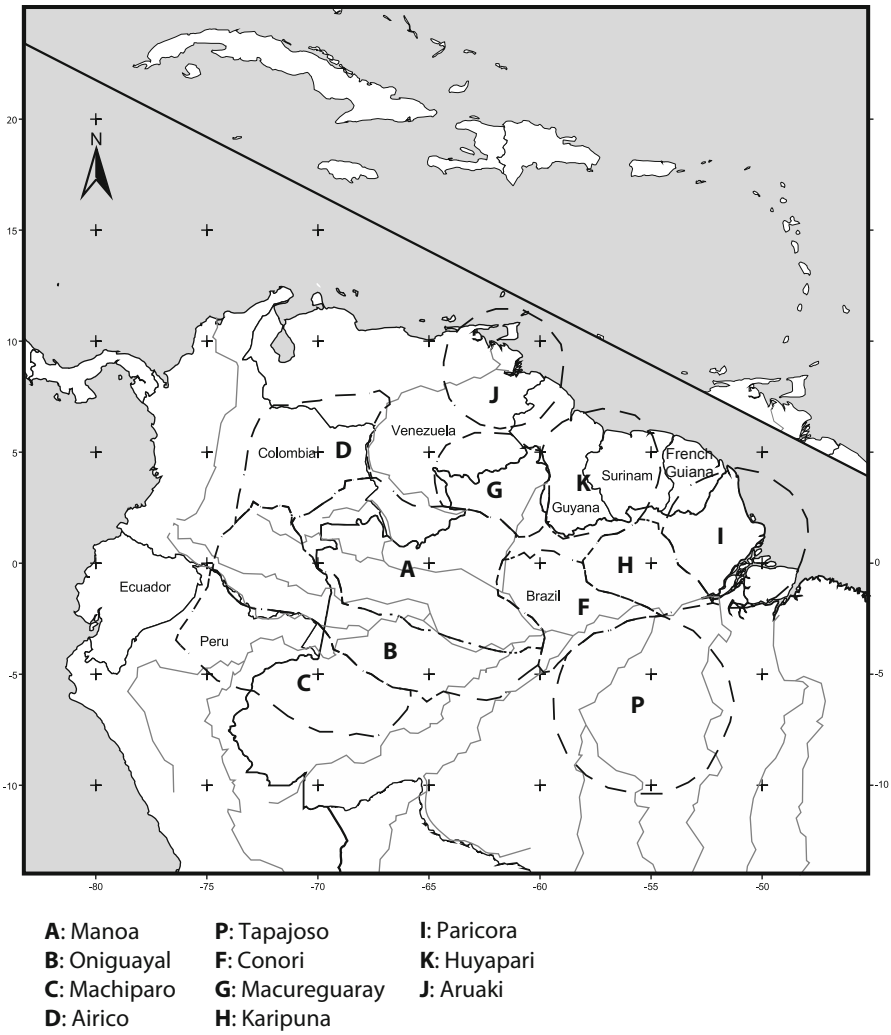

Fig. 2 Amerindian macrosystems: *A* Manoa, *B* Oniguayal, *C* Machiparo, *D* Airico, *P* Tapajoso, *F* Conori, *G* Macureguaray, *H* Karipuna, *I* Paricora, *K* Huyapari, *J* Aruaki. (After Vidal 1993, p. 115)

a combination of all of them. Furthermore, Vidal identified a series of cultural regularities common to these macrosystems: the existence of different ethnic units within the same sociopolitical system; the existence of inherited hierarchies with leaders with power over other populations and ethnic groups; the economic specialization and surplus production for exchange; the socioeconomic interdependence among riverine and terra firme groups; and the existence of clearly defined territories, with buffer zones and fortified border populations with warriors for surveillance and/or defense.

Vidal states that leadership and authority in these confederations is based in the control of labor for surplus production, building infrastructure, military incursions, and territorial expansion. It is possible that control of labor was related to terms like *makú*, *poito*, and *wajáriwa*, which dominant societies used for "servants" and "slaves" as well as for interfluvial groups (Vidal 1993, pp. 34–35; Whitehead 1994, p. 41). Another important aspect is the huge indigenous knowledge regarding different regions and groups. Large-scale political and commercial ties and alliances were common between aboriginal peoples in the lowlands. The relations between regions were frequently institutionalized by road networks (Vidal 1993, pp. 108–113).

Whitehead's and Vidal's model moves away from other proposals that emphasized small size, decentralization, and subsistence economy of lowland societies, supporting a reconstruction with emphasis in social and ethnic complexity and differentiation. Even though the proposal is important, because it corrects the simplified vision about the sociopolitical organization of local groups, it could represent an overcorrection. To verify the existence of these macrosystems does not seem like an easy task, because their dimensions look bigger than usually accepted for prestate complex societies.[5] On maps elaborated by Vidal (2000, p. 645), we can see some "ceremonial centers" and "cities" that might have worked as regional capitals of complex political units and used as starting points (Fig. 3). The utility of archaeological models to interpret ethnohistorical data did not run away from Whitehead, who proposed that to predict political units from stone and earth structures and ritual and "urban" centers could contribute to the interpretation of historical material, allowing a higher resolution analysis level (Whitehead 1994, p. 47).

In 1996, I tried to apply, explicitly, the concept of chiefdom for the analysis of pre-Hispanic exchange in the Orinoco Basin; I pointed out that the majority of studies on the *regional exchange system* were not giving enough attention to the evolutionist approach because of the emphasis on ethnographic and ethnohistoric models, highlighting the continuity of political structures and aboriginal economic institutions, thus creating an extensive and antique image of the system (Gassón 1996, p. 135). After summarizing briefly a series of findings related to "exotic" or "commerce" objects in the Andes, Llanos, and middle Orinoco,[6] I concluded that archaeological

[5] With minimal internal differentiation of authority, any delegation in a chiefdom approaches total delegation, a situation ripe with potential for usurpation (Wright 1977, p. 381). Optimally, a chief should avoid delegating authority, which means that he has to manage his domain from the center (Spencer 2000, p. 375). This, in turn, implies that there is a spatial limit to the territory that a regional chief can effectively rule: I have suggested that in a preindustrial context, the optimal territory size for a single paramount chief's domain would be one with a radius no larger than about one-half day of travel from the regional center (Spencer 1982, pp. 6–7, 1987, p. 375). As a rough estimate, for a territory of circular shape, and a walking speed of 5.6 km (3.5 miles) per hour over a 10-hour day, this would be a maximal domain with a diameter of 56 km (35 miles) and an area of 2,463 km^2 (962 square miles) (Spencer 1990, pp. 6–7).

[6] For example, polished stone artifacts such as beads and pendants made of serpentinite, malachite, amphibolite, phyllite, and jasper have been found in several high-rank archaeological contexts at the primary regional center (site B12) and in one of the regional centers (B21) in the Gaván Region, in Barinas State. The sources of these minerals should be located outside the Llanos, in areas like the Venezuelan Andes, Maracaibo Lake Basin, and farther regions like south of Colombia, north of Ecuador, and the Caribbean (Spencer and Redmond 1992, pp. 153–154). At the primary regional

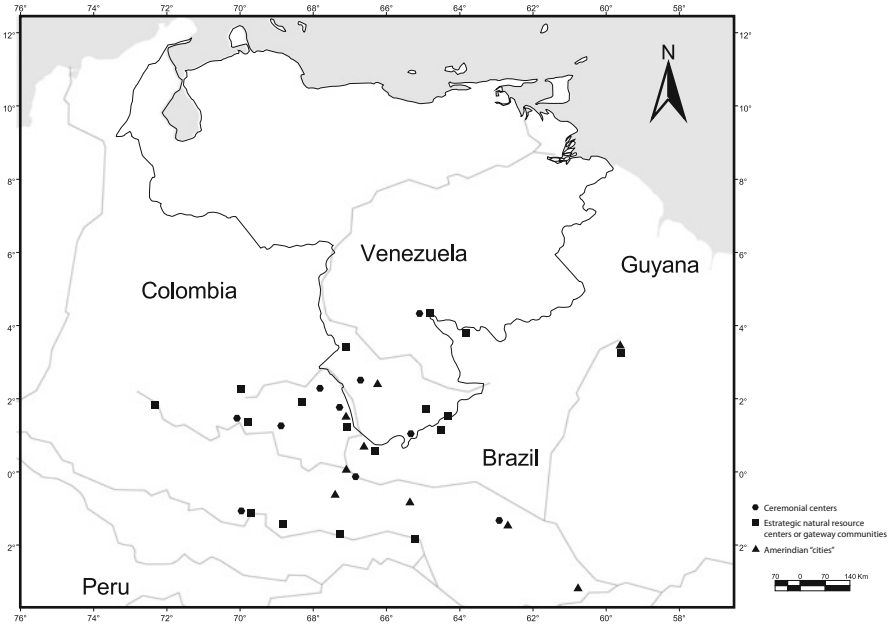

Fig. 3 Amerindian ceremonial centers, gateway communities, and cities. (After Vidal 1999)

objects identified as goods from the exchange, its small size, and constant relation with high rank contexts could indicate the existence of low-intensity "prestigious goods systems," possibly controlled by sectors within the complex society elite.[7] According to this proposition, the complementarity between groups would not be only ecological but also political–economic, based on exchange of prestige goods, done from hand to hand among outgoing entities and members of political elites. Although it is impossible to deny that a great variety of perishables or low archaeological visibility products, including basic goods and raw materials, circulated in local and regional networks coordinated by decentralized societies, the nature and provenience of prestige goods found within archaeological contexts suggest that it

center of El Cedral region, in the same area, a green stone pendant was found resembling a small amphibian or reptile (Gassón 1996, p. 587). Boomert (1987, p. 33, 37) identified these objects as one of the main prestige goods in circulation among groups from the tropical forest and the northeastern coast of South America because of their ritual meaning and symbolic associations, proposing their circulation in exchange systems like the *kula* rings in Melanesia in areas where the *quirípa* was circulating (cf. Malinowski 1975, pp. 95–96; Gassón 1999, p. 81).

[7] The specific economic characteristics of a prestige-good system are dominated by the political advantage gained through exercising control over access to resources that can only be obtained through external trade. However, these are not the resources required for general material well-being or for the manufacture of tools and other utilitarian items. Instead emphasis is placed on controlling the acquisition of wealth objects needed in social transactions and the payment of social debts. Groups are linked to each other through the competitive exchange of wealth objects as gifts and feasting in continuous cycles of status rivalry (Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978, p. 76).

is not right to characterize the interregional exchange in all cases as decentralized (Gassón 1996, p. 145); as stated by Gnecco (1996, pp. 181–184) for the chiefdoms of southwestern Colombia, the exchange of prestige goods is an expression of societies articulated to the emergence and maintenance of the elite political power.

In order to illustrate how these systems and prestige goods were transformed since the colonial encounter, I analyzed the *quirípa*, a primitive exchange pattern widespread in the Orinoco River (Gassón 2000), which contributed to show the inherent limitations of a synchronic and relativist vision of Orinoquian economic systems and institutions. However, these ideas were limited by the relative scarcity of archaeological data and by using a unilineal approach of social evolution that emphasizes the presence of two basic social "types," tribes and chiefdoms, simplifying possible variations among pre-Hispanic societies. I needed more specific and diachronic regional studies aimed to understand the origins, nature, and extension of the pre-Hispanic exchange systems, as well as regional studies aimed to understand the origins, nature, and variation of the pre-Hispanic complex societies.

In 1983, Spencer and Redmond designed an archaeological project to study how the interaction between the piedmont and the high Llanos in Barinas State influenced the social change in this region from a neoevolutionist approach. According to their arguments, complex societies of the chiefdom level emerged in the Gaván region between 500 and 600 AD. The conclusion is supported by the presence of a hierarchical settlement pattern, monumental architecture and engineering, a considerable increment in regional population, social differentiation in residences and burials, and complex social relations with other political units, including exchange and warfare; the latter activities were funded, partially, through the production of farming surpluses (Redmond and Spencer 1990; Spencer 1991; Spencer et al. 1994, p. 138–139). Posterior studies made on the neighboring region of El Cedral indicated the existence of, at least, another hierarchical political unit; in addition, surplus production in considerable amounts was identified, as well as the public consumption of food, as a mechanism used by the elite to attract reward followers, creating and consolidating critical social relations useful to survive in high-risk environments (Gassón 1998, p. 167, 2001, p. 200). Data from El Gaván suggests the presence of a small political unit, strongly hierarchical, and with a political economy based on direct production and redistribution in ceremonial feasting organized by the leaders to gain adepts (Redmond et al. 1999, p. 125; Gassón 2001, p. 201).

Redmond et al. (1999) suggested that political changes in the area had to do with, above all things, competition, commerce, and warfare between neighboring political units. This process is known as cycling chiefdoms, namely the repetitive emergence and collapse process of complex chiefdoms in a social landscape characterized by the presence of complex chiefdoms, simple chiefdoms, and other social formations with lesser integration levels (Anderson 1994, p. 323; Redmond et al. 1999, pp. 111–112). Recent data tends to corroborate the scenario of intense competition and growing and disappearance cycles of political units. Although site C11 (Lomitas Florideas) possess all the elements of an autonomous political unit, it is effectively connected to El Cedral (C1) by raised earthen causeways (Fig. 4), which point out the existence of institutionalized and permanent ties between these two political units (Rey 2003); moreover, the archaeological sites distribution at the regional level indicates a zone

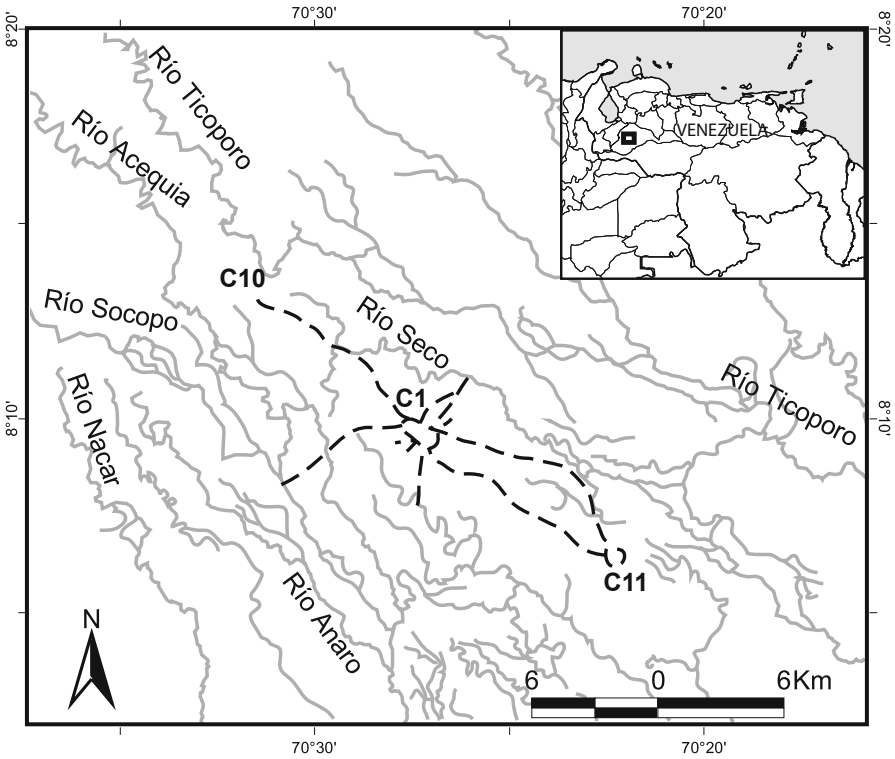

Fig. 4 El Cedral archaeological region showing the location of the primary regional centers of El Cedral (C1) and Lomitas Florideas (C11), and the network of causeways. (After Rey 2003)

with no settlements between units. This could indicate the presence of a buffer zone or "no man's land," which could suggest an autonomous evolution of such units, until one of them joined or appended the other. A preliminary study on the pottery from these regional centers suggests the existence of two phases: one in which each center had a specific style and the other where a common style arose. This suggests a fusion process between Lomitas Florideas and its neighbor El Cedral, supporting in a lesser scale Vidal's proposal regarding the existence of integration levels beyond the regional settlement pattern level; however, the sociopolitical correlate of these interregional patterns are still unknown.

Archaeological research done so far about the complex societies in the western Venezuelan Llanos suggests that an important aspect of the economy was aimed to the production of farming surpluses to finance elite activities such as long distance exchange and warfare, contrary to conventional ideas emphasizing political autonomy, production for subsistence, and lack of hierarchy. The evidence indicates that the dynamics of sociopolitical evolution in the area was linked to competition for labor; this competition was carried out by different strategies like war, tribute and/or labor mobilization, and ceremonial feastings. Economic and political strategies used by complex societies in the area brought to existence variations in the mode of sociopolitical organization, including societies with emphasis on the production of resources

for distribution and others with emphasis on tribute mobilization. There are evidences of the existence of a superior level of integration above the autonomous political unit, although this is only a hypothesis. Nonetheless, all mentioned above alerts us about the necessity to better understand sociopolitical variation within complex societies.

On a higher geographical scale, Boomert (2000) made the first archaeological analysis of a macroregional exchange system. Boomert offers a general approach to the prehistoric cultural development of Trinidad and Tobago as part of the formation process of an interregional ceremonial exchange system that could be understood as an *aboriginal interaction sphere*[8] that included the middle and lower Orinoco, Gulf of Paria, and Guyana's northwestern shores. The study proposes to understand the great Barrancoid influence on ceramic complexes from Saladoid communities in the middle Orinoco, Lesser Antilles, Guianas, and Venezuela's eastern shore, concluding that during the final part of the early Cedrosan subseries (Insular Saladoid), some Barrancoid's ceramic traits "filtered" [sic] from the lower Orinoco to Saladoid villages located to the east and north of South America and the Caribbean, with a process that may have started during the establishment of Los Barrancos (Barrancas Clásico) style/complex by 100 BC. The study refers to the nuclear part of the Barrancoid exchange system as the *lower Orinoco interaction sphere*. The location of Los Barrancos style/complex at the apex of the Orinoco delta offers excellent opportunities for interaction, exchange, and diffusion of the Barrancoid culture toward Orinoco's valley, eastern coast of Venezuela, Trinidad, and Guianas' seashore. The basic criterion to define the boundaries of the interaction sphere was the presence of Los Barrancos/Coporito pottery within Saladoid archaeological sites, besides other class of artifacts clearly of Barrancoid origin. In Tobago, this contact pottery usually consists of ceremonial pots, apparently used as funerary offerings, and other artifacts such as smoking pipes and censers. This suggests that "commerce" artifacts were appreciated by the Saladoid people both for their exotic qualities and for the symbolic messages they carry, perhaps connected to shamanic practices. The *lower Orinoco interaction sphere* must have been aimed to promote political alliances associated to kinship and ritual services; the exchange of matter, energy, and information in the form of myths, histories, songs, dances, news, and other forms of knowledge must have been key for the maintenance of the system (Boomert 2000, pp. 442–444). This study is important because it indicates that in northern South America, there were different interdependency systems in different periods of time, and some of them were not organized under hierarchical principles, meaning that they could have been constituted by societies with similar integration levels (autonomous farming villages and/or systems similar to the Pacific Ocean's "big men") that can be more comprehensible from a perspective with emphasis on the interaction between equivalent political units or *peer polity interaction*.[9]

[8] According to Binford (1972, p. 204), an interaction sphere is defined as the "regular and cultural means to maintain and institutionalize the inter-social interaction."

[9] According to Renfrew (1986, p. 1), the interaction between equivalent political units designates the complete scope of exchanges (including imitation and emulation, competition, war, and exchange

Historical data from the lower Orinoco shows a picture with more cultural complexity, interethnic relations, and social inequalities with a scope not so well understood so far. Heinen (1992, pp. 73–75) has documented with historical, ethnohistorical, and place names data the existence of an important commercial artery from Trinidad, southeaster Orinoco's delta, and Sierra de Imataca to Guyana's highlands. Boomert (2000, p. 386) indicates that the geographical location of Los Barrancos complex is similar to that of Aruacay, a sixteenth century indigenous town that possibly acted as a community to access commerce resources or *gateway community*[10] and that could have played an important role in the multiethnic interaction networks observed during the contact era. However, the cultural diversity landscape illustrated on historic documents contrasts with the simplified landscape offered by the late archaeology, which indicates the presence of two ceramic styles: Guayabitan (Arauquinoid), equivalent to Apostadero or post-Classic Barrancas style, and the protohistoric Mayoid pottery. For this reason it is hard to say at what degree the archaeological characteristics observed in the *lower Orinoco interaction sphere* reflects its sociocultural characteristics (Boomert 2000, pp. 491–493).

Other authors lean toward a reconstruction of social organizations in the lower Orinoco, with emphasis on political complexity. According to Whitehead (1998, p. 155), at the beginning of the sixteenth century, there were several chieftaincies and, at least, three chiefdoms in the area (Yao, Orinoqueponi, and Tivetive) that could be considered as "typical" or even "maximum" chiefdoms surpassing 10,000 inhabitants. The political power derives from the control over long-distance commerce, in particular goods like gold artifacts and cotton, besides the control over sources of local materials and labor. The finding of a gold pectoral in Mazaruni River (Guyana) has been interpreted as the evidence of long-distance commerce from Colombia, but it could also support historic reports about production, commerce, and use of gold artifacts manufactured locally (Whitehead 1990, pp. 32–33). Recently Sanoja, Vargas, and collaborators have also indicated the possible existence of chiefdoms in the lower Orinoco, on the basis of a reinterpretation of historical and new archaeological data, and have suggested an intensive occupation of the lower Caroní by farmer groups belonging to two traditions: Barrancas and Cachamay. The Barrancas Tradition settlements were located at the right margin after 200 AD and its presence is interpreted as the result of Barrancoid expansion during the Classic period (Sanoja et al. 1994, pp. 26–27). The Cachamay Tradition sites were located at the left margin

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of material goods and information), which is performed among autonomous political units (self-governed and politically independent), neighboring or close to each other in the same geographical area, or in some cases, in bigger areas.

[10] "Gateway communities develop either as a response to increased trade or to the settling of sparsely populated areas. They generally are located along natural corridors of communication and at the critical passages between areas of high mineral, agricultural, or craft productivity; dense population; high demand or supply for scarce resources; and, at the interface of different technologies or levels of sociopolitical complexity. . . The function of these settlements is to satisfy demand for commodities through trade and the location of these communities reduces transportation cost involved in their movement" (Hirth 1978, p. 37).

of Caroní River and emerged as a consequence of the fusion of human groups related with the Macapaima phase, Arauquinoid Tradition of middle Orinoco, and the Barrancas Tradition. Besides, the existence of large villages with pottery combining simplified designs from the phases and tradition mentioned above were observed. The villages from Cachamay phase could be related with late chiefdoms mentioned in the chronicles:

> The regional archaeological studies we are conducting in the Middle and Lower Orinoco reveals important precisions regarding the political territorial character and historic dynamic of what could have been the so called Orinoquian chiefdoms. In one hand, the allegedly Morequito chiefdom which is structured, approximately, between 1000 and 1500 of current era, consisted in a possible association of large villages, culturally homogeneous, located next to flooding forest or varzea on both margins of Caroní River, including hunting camps on savannah and gallery forest areas, as well as semi-permanent fishers' villages in the river's islands. . . Regarding the alleged chiefdom of Uyaparí or Orinoco, structured between 1000 BC and 1000 AD, its realms seems to have covered a core of large villages in the Lower Orinoco as Barrancas, Los Barrancos, and their possible sacred sites located in the river's islands, where the access from the Orinoco River to the Atlantic Ocean and viceversa was controlled, and the extraordinary ichthyological richness present in the shallow channels and swamps of the Orinoco Delta. (Sanoja and Vargas 1999, p. 202)

Not all specialists in the area agree with this argument. The image arising from the examination of early historical sources about the late social differentiation corresponds with that of political leaders with an unstable or temporal position with religious and ritualistic functions within an interregional system based on exchange and ritual celebrations between ethnic groups, including the Nepoyo, Chaima, Siawani, Karia, Warao, Verotiani, and Guaiquery (Boomert 2000, p. 393; Heinen and García-Castro 2000, pp. 562, 573–574). These groups had only political organizations with temporal or limited power, thus suggesting that proposals with emphasis on powerful chiefdoms of ethnic federations might be exaggerated. Nevertheless, it is obvious that contemporary ethnography in the region is only the shadow of its pre-Hispanic past:

> We do not subscribe to the somewhat excessive claims made by the Roosevelt and Whitehead schools regarding the size of particular villages or towns and of the populations in general living in Orinoquia in pre-Columbian and early, colonial times, but the isolated ethnic groups one finds today in the Guiana Highlands and the Orinoco Delta are a far cry from the complex trade patterns and the differentiated forms of social and political organization that was characteristic of aboriginal Orinoco River societies. (Heinen and García-Castro 2000, p. 561)

Conclusions

As in the well-known parable of the blind men and an elephant, we are dealing with structures and problems of such magnitude that exceeds the limits of our particular disciplines, hence having only partial and incomplete visions of them. Assuming the inherent risk of stepping on unknown ground, a summary of the current situation looks like this: first, it seems undisputed that during the pre-Hispanic past, there

were extensive exchange relations between societies in Orinoco; however, more than a regional interdependence macrosystem, the data points out toward the existence of different regional exchange systems and subsystems with its origins, composition, limits, and evolution before the colonial epoch not well known yet. It is too risky to export toward the past the divisions and propositions made with historical data from the end of the pre-Hispanic era.

Second, against the initial perception, decentralization does not seem to have been the rule in ancient sociopolitical organizations in the Orinoco, not even in the relations among them. By the contrary, the presence of social inequalities between ethnic groups in the area is notable, although they are expressed in several ways. Nonetheless, an approach aimed to understand the action and specific role of each ethnic group and social sector in the rise and development of these networks of social relations seems more adequate than trying to generalize about the nature of power and inequality in the area or trying to apply fixed social typologies in order to simplify the past. Specific exchange systems could have been organized under different principles, like the uneven exchange between groups with different levels of sociopolitical integration in regional "world systems," the even exchange between groups politically independent and less hierarchical in vast areas, or the prestige goods exchange between complex society's elites in vast but not well-defined areas. The constitution of macrosystems dominated by emerging ethnic groups and the transformation of certain economic institutions seem to be the products of the colonial situation.

Third, recent investigations have confirmed that large sociopolitical units occupied a considerable area in the lowlands of northeastern South America, which would coincide, *grosso modo*, with some interregional exchange systems proposed traditionally. However, the size of these proposed "macrosystems" does not fit very well to what we know about the size and organization of prestate complex societies, thus its exceptional condition should be explained or alternate hypotheses should be tested regarding the political character of its integration in order to understand its relations with the commercial networks. Recent archaeological evidences that could support the existence of settlement units above the regional unit level are too old and of lesser magnitude than the interregional "macrosystems."

Finally, even though a temporal long-term approach has been useful to criticize the synchronic and relativist approach of studies with emphasis on ethnohistorical and ethnographical data, there are no reasons to give priority to archaeological data over historical data or vice versa. Here, I have advocate in favor of a perspective that takes in account diversity, complexity, and explicative priority of the historical process as a way to overcome the primordial or essentialist approach to social relations and political organizations in the area (Zent n. d., p. 2). We cannot contrast the models discussed here without new data gathered through joint research programs, informed by a historical anthropology that is not afraid to step on unknown ground where, for some reason, elephant-size problems usually graze on.

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Palenques and Palisades: A Revision of Social Complexity Issues in Contact-Period Eastern Venezuela

Rodrigo Navarrete

The cultural complexity of Caribbean and northern South American pre-Hispanic societies, especially late chiefdoms, has been a profusely discussed topic in recent decades archaeological literature (Spencer and Redmond 1986; Drennan and Uribe 1987; Spencer 1990, 1998; Drennan 1991; Rodríguez 1992; Rouse 1992; Siegel 1992; Redmond and Spencer 1994; Langebeak and Cárdenas 1996; Redmond 1998; Bacus and Lucero 1999; Wilson 1999). Frequently, contact period colonial documents for the region have implicitly inspired these models, although the attempts to critically reconcile archaeological interpretation with ethnohistoric data have been minimal. This article considers social complexity from a preliminary position in the research process, especially in the moment of documentary revision. It is thus an attempt for seeking for a light in the debate of the validity and reliability of available ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and archaeological written information as documents (Beaudry 1988; Amodio 1999a, b). It is a sort of hermeneutical approach to the sense of reading, translating, interpreting, and criticizing documents. The array of documents that we deal with in this article comprises three bold differentiated historical and knowledge groups: the early chronicles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the late chronicles of the eighteenth century, and the modern ethnohistoric and archaeological approaches to the specific area of the Unare basin in eastern Venezuela.

According to Spanish chronicles and the preliminary archaeological evidences, the Eastern Venezuela Unare Depression was a crucial and sociopolitically complex space during pre-Hispanic times (Civrieux 1980; Acosta 1983). Chronicles of the

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fifteenth and sixteenth centuries described Carib *Palenque* societies as complex hierarchical sociopolitical structures (Castellanos 1987; Fernández de Oviedo 1986; Aguado 1963; Simón 1963). However, chroniclers of the eighteenth century described the same groups as simplified tribal structures (Brizuela 1957; Bueno 1965; Ruíz 1965; Caulín 1966; Gilij 1966; Gumilla 1993).

Current archaeological and ethnographic literature, with interpretation differences giving centrality to one or the other, generally support these representations of regional organizations and transformations. In the next sections, I develop an internal and external critique of historical documentary sources according their political motivations and cultural context. I hope to evaluate the intentions underlying Spanish chroniclers' reasons for deciding to emphasize or to ignore, to elevate or to diminish the complexity of these peoples. I argue that information is constructed in a sociocultural context in which the authors are involved. Thus, this knowledge, as any other, depended on the sociocultural and individual intentions, as well as on the visions of reality in specific cultural circumstances. Information and interpretation must be seen within its ideological context, understanding ideology as a praxis embedded in lived relationships and involved with social practices, individual and collective actions and representations, and cultural world views is, permanently related to power legitimation on behalf of a group or a dominant social class social (Althusser 1971; Abercrombie et al. 1980; Gramsci 1971; Eagleton 1991; Navarrete 2004).

The Unare Depression as Space for Regional Development

The Unare Depression is the most important drainage basin in the region of the eastern Venezuelan *llanos* which, joining with the Zuata-Pao-Caris river basin in the central eastern plateau, constitutes an exceptional pathway from the Orinoco river to the Caribbean coast of Venezuela. Scholars suggested that it represented one of the main routes of penetration of the Amazonian Caribs to the Venezuelan coast and the Antilles (Lathrap 1970; Zucchi 1984, 1985; Tarble 1985). However, regardless of its relevance, archeological researches in the area have been almost none and only recently some ethnohistoric studies have been developed, which have allowed beginning to open interesting interpretative ways for regional history (Rodríguez and Navarrete 1995; Cruz 1997; Rodríguez 1999; Amaiz 2000; Navarrete 2000; Fig. 1).

The limited archaeological evidence from the Unare Depression indicates relations with the middle Orinoco and with coastal late traditions in Western Venezuela. Carib groups coming from the Orinoco river occupied the eastern Venezuelan llanos between 1000 and 1500 AD. Due to the Orinoco basin overpopulation, introduction of seed crop cultivation technology and increased warfare and commerce, they moved north following the main rivers. During the same period, the inland groups were also moving, tentatively associated with Carib languages of the Western-Guyana group, which seems to indicate a northward extension of groups from southern Amazon (Zucchi 1984, 1985; Rodríguez and Navarrete 1995; Tarble 1985; Rodríguez 1999).

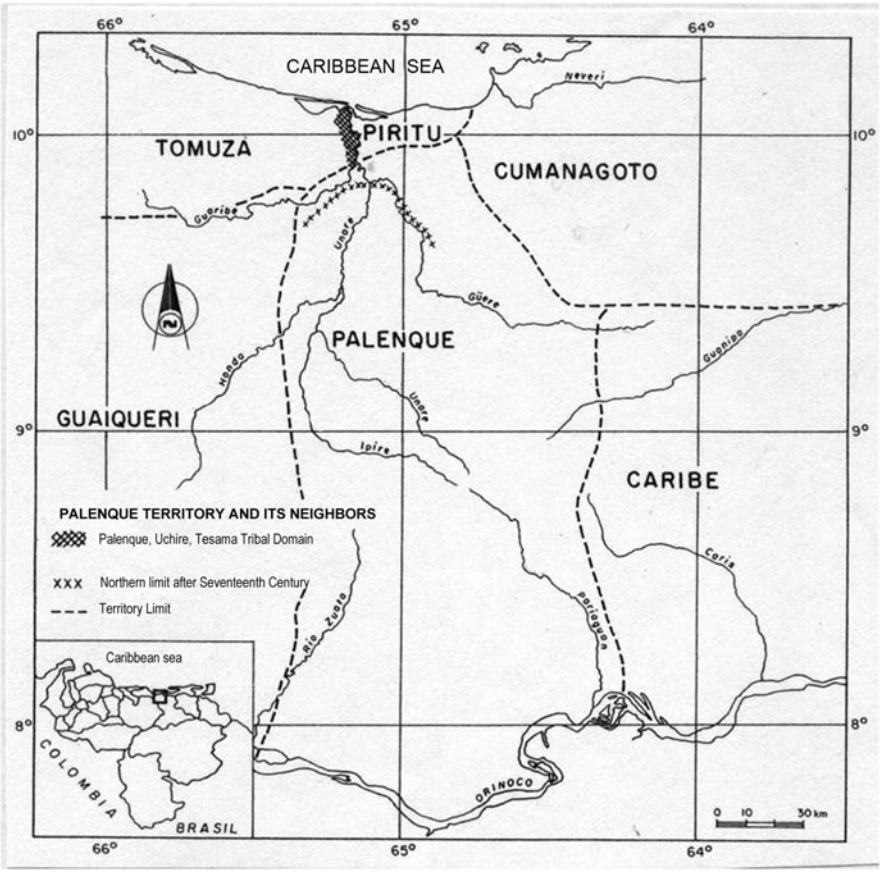

Fig. 1 The territory of Palenque and neighboring ethnic groups by the time of Spanish arrival. (Drawn by Carlos Quintero, IVIC)

In general, historians and anthropologists have interpreted local historical sources following a hypothesis focused in the native transformations during the Spanish conquest period (Civrieux 1980; Acosta 1983; Amodio 1991; Rodríguez 1992). This model assumes that the Palenques, belonging to Carib linguistic branch (to which most of the native groups in Eastern Venezuela were a part of, at the moment of the European contact), had a hierarchical structure, which was progressively deteriorating due to the colonial impact. Although I think this analysis is partially correct to explain the situation that it does not contextualize its sources and it does not take in account its own anthropological presumptions and biases in the process of selecting and interpreting information. A critical approach should, therefore, make explicit its own immersion within a complex web of cultural ways of explanation and interpretation, as well as specific power relationships (Pagden 1982, 1990, 1993, 1995; Hulme 1986; Whitehead 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991).

Early European Perception: The Complex Palenques

Many scholars have acknowledged that Europeans observed, described and interpreted other latitudes peoples under their own optic and needs during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries' process of colonialist expansion (Axtell 1981, 1991, 1992; Amodio 1993; Laredo 1994; Galloway 1995). For the case of the groups inhabiting the Unare region Spaniards emphasized hierarchical aspects and native elite attributes, such as the presence of *caciques* and ethnic militias, a hierarchical communal differentiation, and the possession of sumptuary and prestige objects by the leaders.

The very ethnic definition of the Palenque is problematic. Instead of being an ethnic aboriginal name, the term Palenque is a labeling imposed by the Europeans that emphasized the most evident cultural feature of these people: big defensive palisades around the village (Rodríguez 1992). Initially, these groups were named according their leaders' names but later Palenque began to be used as a generic name. First chroniclers as Castellanos (1987) described such palisades as a distinctive cultural feature of some Carib people in the area, but during the first encounters they named them according their chiefs' names (i.e., Guaramental).

From the sixteenth century, the Spanish colonization of eastern Venezuela had a drastic impact on the sociopolitical dynamics of the groups that inhabited the Unare Depression (Arcila 1973; Lombardi 1982; Lemmo 1983; Amodio 1991). According to the earliest chroniclers, the sociopolitical structure of some of these societies, (i.e., the Palenque) included: (1) a clear differentiation between *cacique* and *piache* (shaman); (2) a three-level settlement pattern which included (a) a prime order village with considerable population and where the main cacique resided with house and defensive mound constructions, (i.e., palisades) and warehouses; (b) villages of a second order, with artificial structures of less complexity, where secondary chiefs resided; and (c) peripheral familiar *bohíos*; (3) consensual possession of the governing elite of hunting areas, fishing lagoons, weapons, and provision warehouses; (4) existence of military chiefs; (5) differential treatment of chiefs not only during daily activities, but also in ritual and funerary practices; (6) inheritance of positions of authority through kinship; (7) tribute to secondary chiefs, who in turn paid it to the central *cacique*; (8) existence of a standing army under the cacique's orders; (9) redistribution of surplus coordinated by the ruling class; (10) frequent commercial and ritual exchange during feasts, ceremonies, and funerals; (11) wide networks of political, commercial and social relations based on subordination; and (12) presence of artifacts made of exotic materials obtained through long-distance exchange (Rodríguez 1992; Navarrete 2000).

By the fifteenth century, because of the pressure of the mercantile development of advanced feudalism, Spain and Portugal opened a broader economic interaction and understanding. Through the conquest and colonization of America, two worldviews overlapped. To represent America, the chroniclers used medieval geographical and anthropological worldviews, while the new mercantile projects and requirements, the emergence of a powerful class of merchants and bankers, represented the nodal

part of the colonial enterprise. This way, while Spain explored mainland America, the medieval perception of the ultramarine physical and moral monsters began to change towards a modern perception (Acosta 1992; Laredo 1994).

Eastern Venezuelan coastal groups that were mainly Caribs, who were not so complex as the Maya or the Aztec's nuclear cultures and their peripheries. However, from the first intercultural experience, the Spanish obsession for gold and especially for pearls in Cubagua Island constructed a mercantile image of native societies, which represented them as owners of a rich and opulent culture, reinforcing this vision with native cosmology (Amodio 1993; Navarrete 2000). Thus, the profit and the search for compatible local social organizations and of exploitable local labor became central elements for Spanish perception and representation. Spain in its process of conformation of capitalism may have tried to impose, by opposition and by coincidence, this model to the Palenque society.

It is possible that all these descriptions were intended to confirm in the Spanish thought, what the audiences at home wanted to hear about America, and legitimated the position and continuity of institutions and/or individuals in the colonial enterprise. On the other hand, Spain constructed its structures of domination in a similar discourse, because of their need to understand natives in their own terms. Finally, they legitimated their power—in Europe—by showing that these groups were as complex and hierarchical as Spain, and that Spain needed to dominate them. This allowed the legitimation of the chiefs and their positions, and also the use and control of their commercial networks (Navarrete 2000).

The same criteria by which Spain evaluated itself were used for these societies, that is, hierarchy as nobility, architecture and spatial distribution as an expression of differentiation and hierarchy. Chroniclers stressed the existence of palisades and of special structures and spaces for the ruling class, and also exchange and accumulation of goods as a sign of power, especially luxury goods in the hands of chiefs. The capacity of the chiefs to centralize and redistribute the production surplus within the tribal area was another issue frequently highlighted by the early chronicles. All these were symbols of Spanish imperial power.

For instance, Aguado and Simón, two early Franciscan missionaries, shared a religious approach to social life by proposing that the origin of local groups should be traced back to the biblical genealogy of the Lost Tribes of Israel. The friars believed that the saving of native souls required their linguistic and cultural conversion. With this aim and with an ethical and affective commitment to their missions they developed favorable accounts of native societies, which sometimes overvalued their cultural and ethical attributes. If one of the positive attributes of the European thought of that time was the capability of a society to organize itself in a complex and hierarchical way, it is understandable that these friars emphasized this image to offer the Spanish politicians a positive reconstruction. Moreover, exaggerating the cultural complexity of the Palenques they tried to balance their unequal competition with other clerical orders in American nuclear areas. Since the crown devoted a big amount of distributed goods and profit to the viceroy's imperial cores in Mexico and Peru, the friars in eastern Venezuela competed trying to equalize the local sociopolitical structures with them.

Aguado, for instance, emphasized restricted access areas and structures exclusively used and exploited by the *cacique*:

> The lords had their hunting landmarks and fishing lagoons, and any individual who entered them to hunt or fish was punished with death, his goods discarded or confiscated and his sons and women made slaves of the chief (Aguado 1963, p. 17).

Since nobility architecture were viewed as differentiation and hierarchy expressions Simón highlighted palisades and restricted spaces and structures for ruling groups in cultural contexts such as the Palenque:

> Where they came to welcome the chief accompanied by its knights ... and homed the captain and all that were with him, with their services and apparels, in a well-constructed shed (Simón 1963, p. 14).

From a distinctive position, Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés described the Palenque in a similar way to Franciscans as a result of his experience as Governor of Cartagena and as General Chronicler of Indies. Under his perspective, the failure and violence of the conquest in eastern Venezuela were not presented to the Spanish Crown and to the politicians as a consequence of the weakness of the Spanish military strategies, but as a valorization of the native defense. Fernández magnified the power of the enemy and the Palenque became too complex to be faced by the Spaniards but sufficiently hierarchical and politically developed to become political allies, since one of his principal roles in Venezuela was to find political ways of pacification.[1] Fernández understood the commercial exchange and the differential possession of prestige goods as power signs as he referred in his detailed account of the main Palenque village of Anoantal:

> That village of the three palisades, named with its province Anoantal, has only seven houses of the lord, and it is in some sense the royal room or *alcázar*. The first and principal is for him; the second is where his women are; the third is where are the women who served him and his women; the fourth is where its weapons are, in which he has plenty of bows and arrows and other supplies for war; the fifth is where his children are kept with those who are younger and nursing; the sixth is for provisions and storage, where from is supply anything necessary to eat; and the seventh and last is the kitchen, where is cooked to breed the lord and everyone who lives within his palisades (Fernández 1986, p. 138).

Others such as Juan de Castellanos developed a particular approach to the Palenque issue. Its chronicler represents the earliest historic reference to these groups from the perspective of an individual who knew directly the region. Nevertheless, after his military incursion in Margarita, Cubagua, and Venezuelan Eastern oriental coast, around 1540 Castellanos settled in Tunja, Colombia, where he became a Chronicler of Indies and later he turned into a friar, moment when he wrote his *Elegías de Varones Ilustres de Indias*. This change from his military experience to a religious position should have had a strong impact in his work, since he decided to transform and probably to hide the violence of the process throughout the imposition of a poetic style to the narration. This epic gender not only overvalued the colonization process

[1] We should not forget that one of the main colonial concerns in Venezuela was to find political strategies for the pacification of the natives (Navarrete 2000).

but also the goodness and greatness of native societies. The capability of the *cacique* to centralize and redistribute the productive excedent was frequently highlighted in his chronicles, as well as other social complexity attributes, as it is shown in his comments about Guaramental, main Palenque cacique:

> Instead, its silences in relation to individuals not belonging to elites and women are notorious in this Eurocentric, androcentric and elitist representation (Trouillot 1995; Navarrete 2004).

Colonial Late References: Palenques Are not the Same Anymore

However, when we analyze documents of the second half of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries about the region, specifically regarding the Palenques, a very different picture emerges. According to the information provided by Brizuela (1957), Ruíz Blanco (1965), Gumilla (1993), and Caulín (1966), during the eighteenth century, first and second order Palenque villages did not exist, the ancestral territories were abandoned and, in general, the centralized hierarchical social structure mentioned in the previous accounts was disarticulated. Indeed, a key character of the chronicles from this period is the almost absolute lack of references on hierarchy, complexity, and differentiation among the Palenques and relatives, and a strong emphasis in an exhaustive ethnographic description of their "simple" everyday life (Rodríguez 1992; Navarrete 2000).

By the eighteenth century, due to the disappearance of numerous groups, the relocation of settlements, the adaptation to new environments, the loss of control of the sea and of its resources, the fusion with southern groups, the transformations of markets, and the weakening of traditional social and political positions, the Carib sociopolitical systems were transformed and the Palenque were forced to move south toward the Orinoco, where they joined Kari'nas and Cumanagotos and to the west, where they occupied the Sierra del Interior and the Tamanaco Forests (Civrieux 1976; Biord 1985; Biord et al. 1989; Morales 1990). This process of "retribalization" (Hill 1996), and the withdrawal of these groups toward the Orinoco river was a consequence of the European movement from the coast to the eastern *llanos*.

I believe that although this simplicity could be a consequence of the ethnocide effect of the colonization process, it is also possible that it was the result of the increasing modernization in the Spanish worldview and of the new social agents. I think it would be more productive to consider the chronicles of the second half of the seventeenth century and of the eighteenth century not exclusively as sources of information, but as a contradictory expression of the processes of Spanish colonial supremacy and crisis in America (Navarrete 2000).

The second half of the seventeenth century was a period of consolidation of the political and administrative power, and also of increased colonial agricultural productivity, while Spain was losing commercial and economic power. With the Bourbon family rule, French ideas modernized and reinvigorated the Iberian economy, but weakened their ruling class, and disrupted the power strategies over colonial

America. Also the colonial economy improvement promoted the formation and consolidation of a local mercantile elite that rejected Spanish power, which was the seed of the Independence projects (Arcila 1973; Lombardi 1982; Amodio 1999a, b).

The thesis of the natural and cultural weakness and immaturity of the Americas argued that the tropics were incapable to promote social complexity and an ethical life. Reinforced by the colonial image of the Bad Savage as a physical and moral monster, it allowed developing an aggressive theory against native societies. Moreover, there was already an underlying incipient concept of progress, related to technology, and a scientific model of knowledge, tied to an empiricist philosophy. But the French Revolution also produced a competing thesis, a bourgeois critique of legitimation of dominant political aims. This is epitomized by Rousseau idea of the Noble Savage whose original pureness and goodness was corrupted and distorted by the civilization and social interaction (Pagden 1993, 1995; Laredo 1994).

In most of the official and military chroniclers such as Brizuela (1957) while there was no need to focus on the complexity of the societies because they had been controlled, the colonial crisis produced a disorganized idea of the native societies. The representation of these societies as simple and uncivilized legitimated and favored the colonial power structures, demonstrating their effectiveness for the control, disintegration, and assimilation of local societies. There was no need to magnify the fierceness and complexity of the enemy because the conquest was supposedly achieved. The simple nature of these societies was indeed the testimony of this triumph. In addition, this image was congruent with the increasingly optimistic European ideas regarding their civilization model.

In this sense, simpler societies became the "otherness" that justified and demonstrated European cultural and ethical superiority and legitimated its political imposition (Amodio 1993). Also an increasing number of conflicts and struggles by native, black, and Creole peoples aroused, while the colonial officials lacked the capacity to effectively eradicate this instability. Somehow they had to justify it to their superiors in Spain and thus they represented native people as uncontrollable savages with disorganized structures incapable of understanding the advantages of being under Spanish rule. In this sense represented a malleable and simple Palenques society through a descriptive discourse, focusing in the geopolitics of immersion in the colonial economy (Navarrete 2000, 2004).

However, simultaneously there was another view of the native societies sponsored by missionaries such as Caulín (1966), Gumilla (1993), and Ruíz (1965) which, in spite of being politically and ideologically opposed to the previous perspective, offered a similar image of the Indians. During the eighteenth century, missions consolidated in eastern Venezuela, and due to the failure and subsequent decrease of the military actions, they became the primary institutions for the control of the native societies (Biord et al. 1989; Amodio et al. 1991).

Being the best informed colonial group, missionaries adopted the Enlightenment philosophy and the empiricist view, which was combined with their Christian ideology. The active role that the different orders played in Venezuela during this period was crucial to the development of an egalitarian conception of the natives, as an expression of the original pureness and goodness of humankind: the Rousseau's ideas of the Noble Savage. For example, Friar Matías Ruíz Blanco offers a positive and ethical vision of the converted Indians as pure human beings that were more susceptible

to become good Christians than the corrupted Europeans. He depicted Palenques as a harmonic and egalitarian society capable of an ethical shift to civilization. Caulín's account of the villages and domestic spaces of these groups do not mention palisades or other specialized structures:

> They are long straw houses, where all the relatives join together. There they hang in their hammocks, or *chinchorros*, in which they sleep outside, with a fire burning under the bed all night long to remedy the lack of cloth and to protect themselves from the night cold. In each of these villages they have an open court with a shelter, or *barraca*, to provide shade and a setting for their parties, dances, and meetings (Caulín 1966, p. 145).

Thus, based in the enlightened ideas of the Noble Savage as a recovery of the original goodness corrupted by civilization and society, these missionaries were the central critics of the inhumanity of the military intervention. Presenting missions as the most human and effective alternative, Franciscans represented natives in positive:

> In general the Indian ... is certainly man, is but its lack of education has deform them so much in the rational, that in the moral sense I dare to say that barbarian and wild Indian is a never known monster, who has head of ignorance, heart of ingratitude, chest of inconstancy, back of laziness, feet of fear, and its belly to drink and its tendency to get drunk are two endless abysms. All these roughness should be smoothen by the force of time, patience and doctrine ... among the monstrosity of such fierce customs (Gumilla 1993, p. 103).

Mixing ethical and empirical visions, Palenques were viewed as a harmonic egalitarian society capable of an ethical civilization (Navarrete 2000). Palenques thus could pave their virtuous way to a good civilization:

> Their common dress is to walk naked as wild beasts; and as much they wear, as the just reallocated in towns, cotton bandages which with they cover their honesty in the events, when they show themselves in public, until with the time and with the careful devotion of the Missionary Father, they become devoted to work, and to the use of shirt and trousers and other decent clothes for party days (Caulín 1966, p. 144–145).

As a consequence their Palenque's representation as a simple and nonhierarchical society was a mixture of images. First their supposed link with the Tribes of Israel reified the image of the uncivilized condition of the non-Christian world (Acosta 1992). Second some chroniclers criticized Western society and considered native condition as the idyllic Paradise, where equality and simplicity were the natural and pure attributes of humankind. In the third place there was an empiricist Enlightenment attempt to systematically describe the cosmos, including societies. Also, within Transformationist model, natives were seen as expressions of a simpler level of societal development, a living testimony of Western progress.

From the Present: Palenques and Venezuelan Current Ethnohistory

Many social scientists and historians have considered the process of contact in the New World as one of decomposition and sociopolitical and cultural disintegration in the presence of the immense military European power (Acosta 1983; Whitehead 1988, 1989; Rodríguez 1992; Hill 1996). For the analysis of the Palenques there are

at least three approaches which are related to different uses of ethnohistoric sources and of conceptual systems.

First, Acosta Saignes indicated that the Palenque society was different from that of their neighbors because in spite of speaking a Carib language, they had many cultural traits of the Arawaks. This assumption is based on the paradigm of the Cultural Areas, which related cultural complexity with the Andes, and cultural simplicity with the Amazonian lowlands (Steward 1948, 1955; Steward and Faron 1959). Acosta Saignes saw the Arawaks as a civilizing and progressive society, while the Caribs kept themselves egalitarian and aggressive, as the colonial model considered Caribs as barbarians and Arawaks as civilized. This interpretation was conditioned by the ethnohistoric sources, since Acosta Saignes centered on early chronicles, and thus the information was related to social complexity image (Navarrete 2000).

Second, Civrieux (1976, 1980) had a more empiricist and functional approach that stressed material culture and organizational structures. His preference for the late chronicles, which were closer to the ethnographic discourse, and his objective and neutral anthropology, favored the image of the Palenque as a society with a tribal structure.

Finally, Rodríguez Yilo (1992), through a comparative and historical understanding of the colonial documents, and the works of Acosta Saignes and Civrieux, identified two stages in the history of the Palenques. First, during the sixteenth century and part of the seventeenth century, a complex hierarchical society, and second, during the second part of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, this society became nonhierarchical. Rodríguez Yilo interpreted these changes as a forced process of simplification or retribalization, explaining it through the negative impact of the Spanish conquest (Whitehead 1988, 1989; Rodríguez 1992; Hill 1996). Under the influence neoevolutionist models of "chiefdom," the concept of retribalization relates to the assumption that a society returns to its previous natural sociopolitical condition due to the pressure of some external or atypical conditions (Redmond and Spencer 1994; Redmond 1998). She selected from the sources those cultural traits that place societies within a certain type or evolutionary class: differentiation of architectural styles, differential consumption of goods, multilevel hierarchy, presence of bureaucracy, social division of labor, internal and external multidirectional commercial networks, and dominant and subordinated groups.

These differences in versions of this specific past are not only determined by methodological distinctions but also specially from the authors' interpretations and positions. Palenques has been contradictorily perceived by an actualization of the Noble Savage/Barbarian dichotomy in which Arawaks are pacific and complex while any hostile tribal and simple group is Carib. Acosta Saignes highlighted an exceptional Eastern hierarchy among egalitarian Caribs by means of early sources. His perception transpires a nationalist, progressive, and evolutionary political position that magnified this culture. On the contrary, Civrieux selected late sources and his "objective and politically neutral" method presents a tribal Palenques. Rodríguez Yilo, on her side, influenced by neoevolutionism, applied a modern technocratic perception in which capitalist nature–culture relationships are projected to the past (Gándara 1982).

Nevertheless, I argue that not every past interpretation relies in the contextual field of present representation. It would be absurd to keep trying to understand the past if we assume the presentist premise by which any archaeological knowledge is only relative to current conditions. Therefore, I proposes that it is possible and necessary to potentiate the capability to listen and visualize the other side of history. Even though Venezuelan native communities did not produce written documents, other material culture elements, accessible by archeological means, comprise communicational possibilities.[2] Any material culture of a past society is not only the reflex of its socioeconomic, political, and cultural activities. This symbolic potential makes it, together with individuals that produced them, an active agent for the construction and transformation of social and cultural matters (Kus 1982; Appadurai 1986; Lemmonier 1986; Miller 1988; Beaudry et al. 1991). The articulation of archaeological and ethnohistoric evidences and interpretations is a methodological alternative in order to understand ideological issues in and about the past (Kus 1982; Demarest and Conrad 1992). Although archaeology is not the methodological solution, since it carries its own ambiguities and contradictions, it is capable of offering a new perspective (Galloway 1992, 1995). This is the only way we could understand that the Palenque sociopolitical transformations, and the changes in their representation are products of the struggles among worldviews and the different political interests of the colonial social actors who wrote the documents, of those who produced its material practices in their daily life, and of the anthropologists who interpreted them.

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[2] I am currently carrying out, with Ana Cristina Rodríguez, an extensive archaeological survey at the Clarines town surroundings, in the Unare Basin, collecting material correlates for the debated native local social complexity and re-composition process, sponsored by the Cultural Heritage Institute (Venezuela) and the Council for Scientific and Humanistic Development (Central University of Venezuela) as part of my doctoral research in the Department of Anthropology SUNY-Binghamton with a National Science Foundation fellowship.

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Agricola est quem domus demonstrat

Alejandro F. Haber

A few years ago, Andrew Sherratt published an article in *Antiquity* in which he suggested the following relationship:

> "Anthropologists are introduced to the fundamentals of kinship through the Latin tag *pater est quem nuptiae demonstrant*: the legal father (who is not necessarily the *genitor*) is the person indicated by the marriage ceremonies; the social takes precedence over the biological. The farmer, on the same principle, can best be defined by his/her way of life and habit of dwelling in houses: *agricola est quem domus demonstrat*." (Sherratt 1997, p. 276)

The relevance of this relationship for the discussion of Andean Formative seems difficult to conceal. The concept of Formative as well as its relative Neolithic, at least from its revolutionary wording in Childe's antebellum writings, suggests the close relationship between residential and economic change. The nature of this relationship, however, is far from enjoying the consensus that its existence has. While domestication and sedentary lifestyle have been identified as concurrent phenomena, and also central to the Neolithic revolutionary conception, the precedence of one over the other accompanies the theoretical inclinations of the authors. Those who have favored environmental determinism have also considered the economic changes as directors of other trends, sometimes even more visible in society, such as the appearance of permanent residences and/or food processing technologies. It is among those who, like Sherratt prefer to retain a dialectical tradition, residential setting of society helps to define a productive economy.

In the Andean world it does not seem necessary to introduce the relationship between home and domestication. Maybe since the influences, both large, of Childe and American neoevolutionism it seems to have been incorporated to the common sense of the discipline. This does not prevent, especially for the early moments of the process, the disruption of the peaceful pace of history with the appearance of notable counterexamples, as in the case of the early architecture of the Peruvian coast and, moreover, the developments described as monumental in preceramic contexts. However, I will not make reference to the coast but, as it is expected, to the Atacama plateau.

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After all, the Atacama plateau is one of the regions in which the issue of domestication and its relation to the Formative process has been an axis around which the interests of research and archaeological narrative have revolved. It is clear that the Atacama plateau is one of the scenarios chosen by the archaeologists of domestication, though in the case of animal domestication, and thus domestication in motion, its causal effect on the residence appears not to be justified from economic perspectives. However, from more dialectical perspectives, we would argue that mobile or not, the property, the houses have had to play their role in shaping social units capable of exerting their rights over it.

Llama domestication has been the main focus of archaeological research in the last 20 years in the Atacama plateau. Some authors have suggested llama meat exploitation and domestication up to 3000–2000 BC (Yacobaccio et al. 1994), while others have favored the use and selection of wool as the heart of the llama taming in the region (Dransart 1991; Elkin 1996; Reigadas 1994).

Several explanations have been proposed for this, including adaptation to the environment in the context of climatic and/or demographic stress, the need for greater reliability of subsistence resources, the need to produce wool and at the same time, other social and cultural factors were ignored. Specialization in llama herding is usually considered the most important economic trend of highland communities from the first millennium AD, and meat, wool, and/or transport, alternatively or in various combinations, are seen as the main economic interests of those communities. Even though it was never expected that vegetable gathering and hunting were inexistent, their role in the social and economic strategies is generally minimized.

In this paper, I take up the discussion of the relationship between home and domestication, but under two conditions. On one hand, I take a relational view far from unidirectional causalities and diverse determinisms. On the other hand, I do not focus on the appropriation of the llama as a domestic resource, but, believe it or not, of the vicuña.

Although the archaeology of the Atacama plateau is not as widely extended as we would wish, it is true that we are lucky to have few but refined studies. The detailed excavation conducted by Aschero in the Quebrada Seca 3 rockshelter (4,100 m asl) provides evidence for the Archaic period. While camelid bones prevail throughout the sequence from the Early to Late Holocene, and regarding that fact it has been suggested a process of llama domestication, the representation of vicuña bones, instead of diminishing, grows along time against that of the larger camelids (guanaco and/or llama) (Elkin 1996, p. 320). The animal bone assemblages show a growing importance of the vicuña, from 60 % in the early Holocene, ca. 75 % in the mid-Holocene up to ca. 90 % in the Late Holocene (Fig. 1).

It is generally agreed that towards the first millennium AD, llama herding was firmly established as the main economic activity of the Atacama plateau communities, even if agriculture, plant gathering, and vicuña hunting were also included. When specific determinations of the bone assemblages are not included as part of this claim, it is assumed that the overwhelming preponderance of camelids in the animal bone assemblage sustains llama herding (Olivera 1997), but when specific determinations are made, the preponderance of the vicuña is highlighted instead (Olivera and Elkin 1994, p. 112).

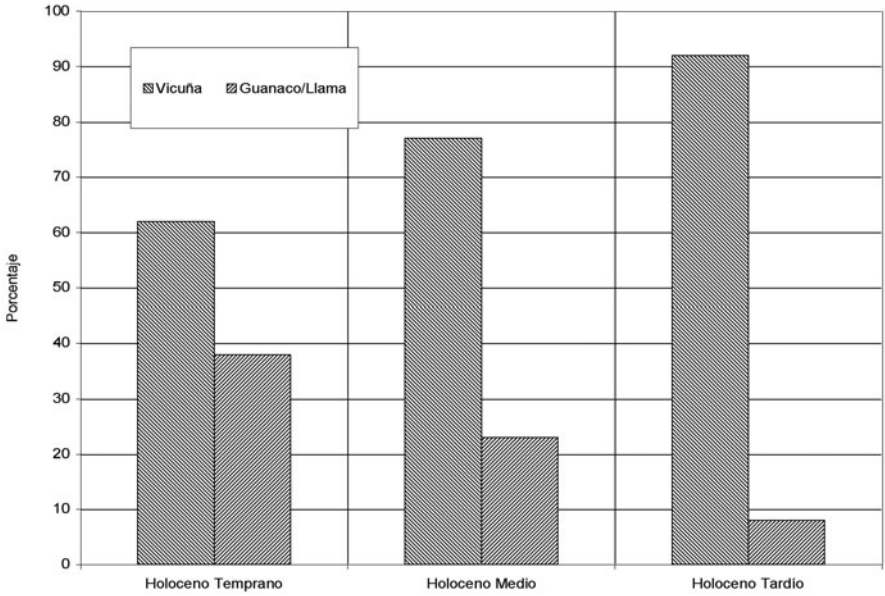

Fig. 1 Relative frequency of vicuña and guanaco bone specimens in QS3, grouped by period. (After Elkin 1996)

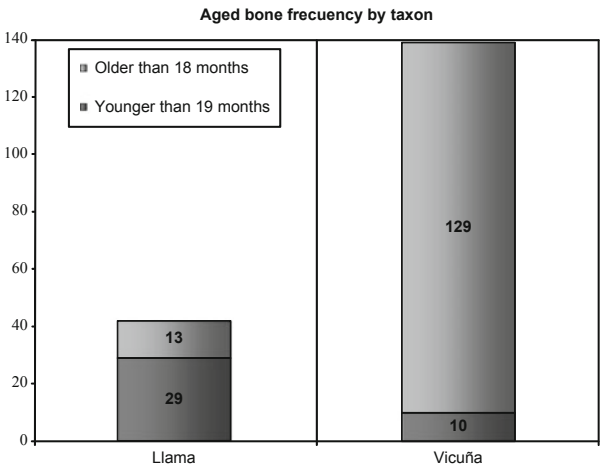

Fig. 2 Frequency of individual death age according to vicuña and llama bone specimens, in TC1

A detailed zooarchaeological analysis of the assemblage obtained in Tebenquiche Chico 1 (3650 m asl) showed that llamas and vicuñas were object of distinctly different practices[1] (Haber 2001a). While the llama bones indicate patterns of immature animal slaughter, the vicuña bones show a preponderance of mature animals (Fig. 2).

[1] The procedure followed for the taxonomic analysis of camelid bone assemblage (Artiodactyla NISP = 2445; Camelidae NISP = 2203) included the classification as proposed by Benavente et al.

It is likely that these patterns reflect a differential preference pattern on llama meat and vicuña wool exploitation. The bones deposited within the houses also show different patterns of domestic consumption. While llama bones display prominence of the anatomical parts usually processed by boiling to extract their nutrients (skull, vertebrae, and spinal bones), foot bones have the largest representation of the vicuña skeleton (Fig. 3). Probably the vicuña pattern indicates the introduction of hides with wool and feet attached, and its processing within the domestic space of the house. This finds some support in the vicuña wool cuts and in lithic cutting tools found in these domestic contexts. Alongside with this, the importance of exploiting vicuña is highlighted by a preponderance of vicuña bones over llamas 70–30 %, respectively. Thus, while llama herding is asserted as a well-established economic practice in the first millennium AD,[2] vicuña hunting and its fine wool production are highlighted as probable exchange good production. The Tebenquiche Chico archaeological record undermines the vision of llamas herding as the main economic activity of the first millennium AD in the Atacama plateau, but also of the human–animal relationships as guided by subsistence goals. It offers, however, the perspective of sedentary communities with well-established agricultural and herding practices, actively engaged in vicuña hunting and fine wool production, probably as a good for interregional exchange.

The long assumption of llama herding as the major subsistence adaptation of the communities of the Atacama plateau has conspired against agricultural and hunting production as well as against interregional trade activities. That assumption has also operated in the interpretations of the occupations of the second millennium AD in the high plateau landscape (Raffino and Cigliano 1973). Also, the colonial and republican historical data show the importance and duration of the vicuña hunting pattern for fine wool production, in coordination with regional markets of the Peruvian space and global markets through the distribution of wool from Atlantic ports such as Buenos Aires and Pacific ports such as Cobija (Mata 2000; Puló de Ortiz 1998). Although written documents for Atacama highlands are, depending on the period, scarce or nonexistent, the trade records of more integrated regions show vicuña wool products

1993, which yielded results *Vicugna vicugna* and *Lama glama* as the only specific determinations, which served as basis for considering these two species as a taxonomic hypotheses of the camelid group and reduce the range of multispecific determinations into three groups: vicuñas, llamas, and llamas/vicuñas. Measurements of the proximal epiphysis width were also computed and finally other specimens were classified based on differences in size range and state of fusion, assuming the broad diversity of sizes between the two camelid species. The NISP assigned to a species level reached 237 (Haber 1999, 2001a, b).

[2] Ten 14C dates performed on charcoal samples dug in TC1 correspond to the period between mid-third century or the late sixth century until the early eleventh century or mid-thirteenth century AD: LP-724 1610 ± 70, LP-764 1460 ± 60, LP-745 1430 ± 60, LP-774 1360 ± 60, LP-795 1350 ± 80, LP-763 1240 ± 50, ± 1130 LP-741 70, LP-945 1130 ± 90, LP-964 1080 ± 60, LP-739 1050 ± 45, LP-967 960 ± 60, 900 ± 44 660 Beta-70, LP-780 880 ± 60. This sequence has been interpreted as evidence of a long occupation of the TC1 dwelling, the possibility exists, however, that the dispersion of dates were spread as the effect of other factors, such as "old wood" problem, which could affect bush twigs in the Puna environment as tree trunks are affected in other areas (Haber 1999).

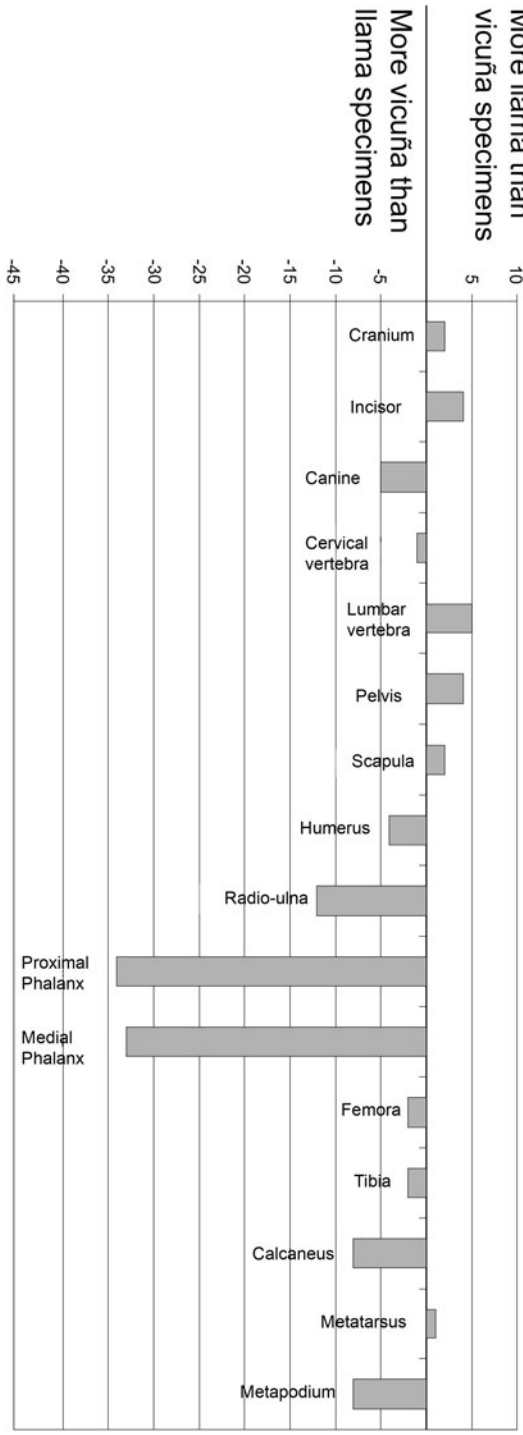

Fig. 3 Frequency difference between llama and vicuña in TC1

as one of the major commodities of Tucumán and Atacama in colonial and republican times (Lorandi 1997; Mata 2000).

While the relative ethnographic invisibility of the vicuña could be explained given the current illegality of the hunt, this argument is inadequate to account for the scarce interest it enjoys in archaeological literature. Instead, this is better understood according to the strong evolutionary assumption regarding the *transcendental impact of domestication* as well as *domestication as a step forward in human domination of nature*. It is often assumed that domestication was an event which introduced dramatic effects on human society, making it unnecessary to resort to hunt game animals and gathering wild plants since they could draw on more productive economic activities. Normally, it is assumed that animal domestication implied a change in the relationship between humans and animals, and correspondingly the continuity of hunting activities after domestication is seen as an anachronistic relict. Since the causes of domestication are seen in environmental changes and demographic stress, and domestication itself is seen as an adaptive strategy, vicuña hunting as an important source of animal resources does not fit in here. I think that at this point it may be reasonable to reverse the argument. If vicuña hunting was an important source of animal products throughout the prehistoric sequence, llama domestication cannot be understood as an adaptive strategy to changing environmental and/or demographic conditions. Although it may seem unquestionable that domestication would include some changes in human–animal relationships, it seems necessary to develop a broader theoretical framework. Mainly, the social relationships included in the domestication of nature should be incorporated into such framework.

In order to differentiate this new framework from the theory of domestication, I name domesticity, not the relationships between humans and animals (e.g., the taming and control of animals), or the involved social relations between humans (e.g., property rights on land) but, instead, the relationships between these two kinds of relationships. Domesticity, then, involves the mutual structuring of social relations on the land and the relationship with land.[3] Thus, an understanding of the creation of the llama as a domestic animal would include the mutual implications of the relationships with llamas and the social relations on llamas. I also suggest that the same framework should be considered for understanding the vicuña as a nondomestic animal. It is in this sense that the Quechua–Aymara linguistic concepts on domestic relationships offer an alternative to the Indo-European emphasis on the domestication as control and domination of nature by humans. The Andean term that describes domestic relations is *uywaña*. Coming from the root *uyw*-, this term refers to being the owner of animals, not in the sense of dominating them but in a relationship of care, nurture, respect, and love (Castro 1986; Dransart 2002; Martinez 1976, 1989;[4] Van Kessel and Cruz 1992). The same term is applied to

[3] The term domesticity, as I use it here and in other texts, is virtually synonymous with *uywaña*. Its Indo-European root and its proximity to domestication allow me to use it as an intermediate in the argumentation that aims at reaching *uywaña* coming from domestication.

[4] This author uses lexical as well as colonial and ethnographic information, providing temporal endurance to the semantic network around the root *uyw*-.

relationships between parents and children, and between people and the mountain, the latter as the owner and breeder of the land or the land itself as the owner and breeder. Other related terms refer to sacred places, ancestor worship, and various aspects of production technology, for example, to make the water irrigate the crops. The same type of relationships between herders and animals are expected between them and their children and between the mountain and the people. And even the welfare of the family (i.e., the protection expected from the mountain) is a cause and consequence of the welfare of their flocks and their children. What is the place of the vicuñas, as "natural object without an owner" in the framework offered by the semantic constellation pointed to by *uywaña*?

Again, and unlike the Indo-European vision, in the Quechua–Aymara vision there is not a neat separation or opposition between the natural and cultural domains. *Uywaña*, however, involves nested relationships mutually inclusive of the various relationships. Since vicuñas are not considered *uywa* (i.e., animals with owners) but *salqa* (usually translated as wild), however it is considered that the mountain is their owner (Castro 1986; Grebe 1984). The mountain is the main owner of both humans and nonhumans. But just as a person owns its llamas and the mountain is the owner of its people, the vicuñas are the flock of the mountain. The mountain, in the same way as the land, is considered an agent with which humans are expected to negotiate their production and reproduction (*uywaña*). One of the corollaries to be drawn is that the *salqa* aspect (or, we might also say, not humanly *uywa*) of the vicuñas (and other resources) does not imply that they fall outside the human range of action. Social access to vicuñas is not restricted to specific families as it is the case with llamas, but is extended to all peasant families. This can be seen in the practice of vicuña meat sharing. Vicuña meat is shared among the peasants through family boundaries, and the same can be said for other hunted prey (mainly *suris*). Sharing food can be seen as an integral aspect of negotiation between the hunter and the mountain, as a payment to an agent in recognition for having killed one of his creatures, the same sort of retribution expected when the owner of a llama delivers its meat to another person. But it is not necessarily a negotiation exclusively with the mountain. The idea of including extradomestic subjects in the appropriation marks it through the practice of negotiation, and excludes those subjects as potential future claimants. Thus, the reciprocal relations included in the *uywaña* concept can be seen in both human–llama relationships and human–vicuña relationships, only operating at different levels of inclusion. The human–llama relationship can be understood as transitive reciprocity, in which humans are both owners (of the llamas) and creatures (of the mountain). The difference between these relationships lie in the agency of appropriation, or property/nurture, of land, which is, respectively, the family and the people (or several families). Yet, indeed, this difference is not of mutual opposition, but of nested levels, since all the villagers are, in turn, creatures of the same owner.

The archaeological record of Tebenquiche Chico 1 shows two distinctly different patterns of llama and vicuña domestic food consumption. This divergence can be explained in terms the sharing of vicuña among families and the consumption of llama within the family. Bitularia has ethnographically observed a similar pattern where llama food is also consumed by the domestic unit, but vicuña food is widely

shared once the prey has been skinned and his feet have been separated and the identity of the animal has been thus concealed (Bitularia 1989). A different pattern is observed with nonfood products. The owner of the animal appropriates nonfood products in the case of the llama, and these generally receive the same treatment as foodstuffs. It is not the same with nonfood vicuña products; the wool appropriated by the hunter is not shared, unlike foodstuff. A wider exploration of the place of the vicuña in the context of domesticity could follow the poetics and politics included in the handling and deposition of vicuña feet.

Two types of vicuña products are obtained. Food products are usually shared among families and the hunter's social unit appropriated nonfood products (mainly wool). The products to be obtained from the vicuña are the same both in archaeological and ethnographic contexts. What has changed, besides the technology of firearms, is the context of state repression of vicuña hunting. In such a context, the vicuña food is consciously manipulated once the prey has been skinned, and its wool is usually hidden from strangers' eyes and appropriated by the hunter (Bitularia 1989). The vicuña feet, which are not exploited for food or wool are hidden in the skinning spot. This concealment means a social qualification of vicuña hunting, and the same can be said of the hunter's jargon. Hunters do not mention the vicuña with that term, they use a more specialized one that is not used or understood by anyone except them (Bitularia 1989). Again, vicuñas are discursively categorized by a name that restricts the mutual understanding outside the group of hunters, their relatives and close friends.

The dual pattern of vicuña resource exploitation seems as true for the first millennium AD as it is for the present. Skinned vicuñas were similar to skinned young llamas and their handling as a resource eluded identification. It can be said that the skinned bodies of the vicuñas were sufficiently ambiguous to be openly distributed and appropriated. But the wool (and the hide if the wool was still there) was a clear and unambiguous signal of vicuña appropriation. While wool was an object of domestic appropriation, this happened inside the house, where people outside the family were spatially and socially excluded. On the other hand, vicuña feet were not resources, be it food and nonfood. The scarce amounts of meat, bone, and wool to remove from the feet were not worth the work required for removal. Thus, the vicuña feet could be considered a discarded part of the animals. However, vicuña feet were not discarded as having no significance. During the first millennium AD, vicuña feet were arranged within the domestic architecture; in ethnographic contexts, however, they were buried under the ground or under stones (Bitularia 1989). Although they were not resources, vicuña feet are a clear sign of hunting and vicuña wool appropriation.

The politics of vicuña hunting can be understood in terms of the dual nature of vicuña resources. But it also deserves to be explored in the poetics included in the representation of vicuña resource appropriation. The domestic landscape of the first millennium AD in Tebenquiche Chico provides the framework for understanding vicuña resource politics. The domestic units were clearly demarcated by the practice and representation of domestic appropriation of the means of agricultural production, land, and water (Haber 2001b). Not only was each family dwelling associated with a main irrigation channel but also waslocated in the line of rigidity where the main

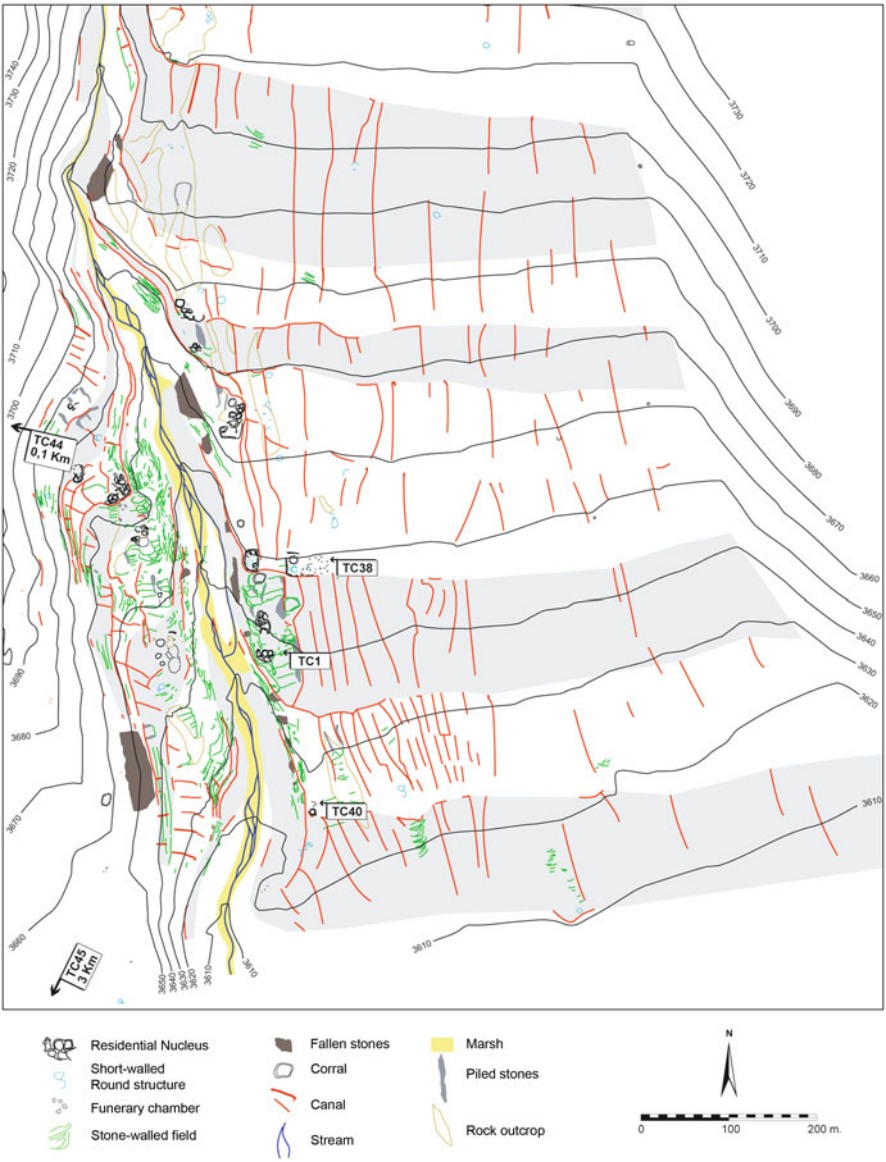

Fig. 4 Domestic groups and irrigation networks in TC1

channel reached the highest point that marked the land to be irrigated. Since the line of rigidity technically determined the quantity and quality of appropriated agricultural land per family, it can be said that the house monumentalized this type of domestic appropriation (Fig. 4). Three domestic units have been excavated in Tebenquiche Chico (TC1, TC2, and TC27; the whole village consists of 13 households, with different

preservation conditions. TC1 excavations[5] have revealed, in addition, the ritual contexts in which the housing construction took place (Haber 1999, 2001a, b). Remains of combustion in pits, deposits of pottery, and a premature human infant were found under the walls of TC1, and at least two pots were placed inside one of the walls of that house, presumably containing some perishable substance, all of which reinforces the idea of the importance of collective ritual, and the importance of the house in the definition of social units productive resource appropriation. Llama herding also implied domestic resource appropriation, and the domestic context of consumption and cooking practices reinforced, in turn, the social unit of appropriation. Each household carried out agricultural and herding practices and agricultural and llama resources were also domestically appropriated. The nondomestic resources, on the other hand, were accessible without any restriction. Stone resources used as building materials and for tool manufacture (including spades used in agricultural work) show no political constraints to social access. The same might be considered of the vicuña resources. But vicuña bones show neat patterns to be contrasted with those of the llamas: there was a clear selectivity in the mature animal hunting at its maximum age of wool production. And the feet bones are overrepresented among the bones deposited within the houses. While vicuña food could be shared among families and even taken outside the houses, vicuña wool and feet came into the house. If the pattern of political access to the vicuña resource can be characterized as unrestricted domestic appropriation of vicuña, vicuña wool should be considered as a political anomaly.

If the anomalous nature of domestic appropriation of the vicuña resource is true, some kind of recategorization could be expected. The vicuña feet deposition inside the houses, as it involves concealment from nondomestic eyes of the signals of vicuña wool appropriation, could be interpreted as such categorization. A second type of poetic elaboration can be interpreted from a series of pictographs painted on the inner wall of the inner enclosure of the house of TC1. These pictographs mainly illustrate two types of figures. Some zoomorphic figures in yellow, clearly camelids, but ambiguously llamas and vicuñas, are illustrated next to other vertical figures in red (Fig. 5). I cannot decide whether the ambiguity of the camelid representations is an artifact of my inability to interpret them or not. However, I can still point out that, in the same context in which llamas and vicuñas were categories clearly differentiated in practice, the same categories were represented with enough ambiguity so that I cannot differentiate them.[6] It is also interesting that the spatial and social

[5] A detailed description of Tebenquiche Chico archaeological site and particularly the excavations at TC1 can be seen in Haber (1999, 2001a, b).

[6] In response to my interpretation of ambiguity in the representation, Gallardo is of the opinion that "The author cannot be himself used as evidence before the cave images. The fact the he who does not understand them fully, may be because he simply does not acknowledge the recognition code." It is true, the representations seem ambiguous to me, and not necessarily to those who made them. But the same is equally true for any observation that contains interpretation, especially when it comes to representations. If I had said that it was about llamas, or vicuñas or camelids, it might not have aroused such a reaction. That is, certainty causes fewer problems than ambiguity. My interpretation of categories such as llamas or vicuñas did not cause such reaction when bone patterns were implied. It was my interpretation of ambiguous representations what caused such a reaction. It has been a

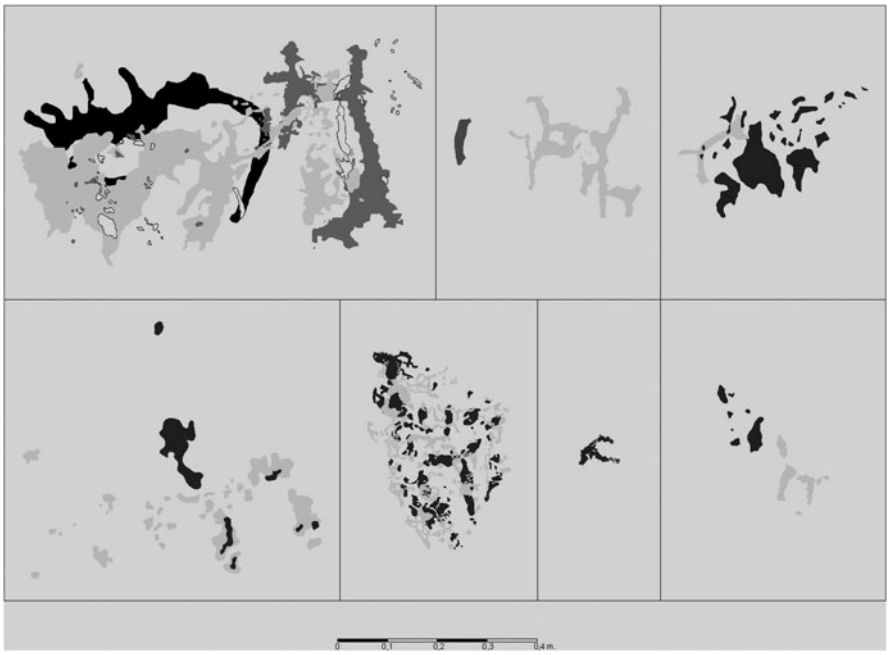

Fig. 5 Pictographs on wall blocks TC1A2

context in which these pictographic discourses on animal resources were exhibited. Pictographic discourse is ambiguous as to whether the policy on access to resources was domestically restricted (llama) or not (vicuña), but the context of that discourse exhibition was domestically restricted.

Before exploring the historical potential of the framework provided by *uywaña*. I am interested in showing some images that allow me to figure out that the Tebenquiche Chico experience is not an isolated case. While the visibility of the houses and irrigation networks is far from as neat in other areas as it is here, mostly due to recent

long time that is generally acknowledged that we never have the "recognition code" that Gallardo longs for. Therefore, all our observations of representations are interpretations, those that interpret certainty as well as those that interpret ambiguity. In addition to this great weakness shared with many other interpretations of archaeological representations for which we do not have any code, my interpretation has only one strength: the context in which the representations were made, used and excavated. The context allows us to include them in a domestic political topography, but also to compare the categorization process between the animal bone and the art record without using codes (which we do not have), but considering both types of objects in the context of social practices. It is true that I find representations ambiguous; at least they are ambiguous to me regarding the categorization that I could interpret from bone remains found in the same house, and which are the result of social practices (i.e., actions with political dimension). Painting a wall is also a social practice, and since it is in the same house, I can assume that it is likely that those who have made or used (or seen) the pictographs were related to those that have produced the bone patterns in the same house (we could not even exclude the possibility that they were partly the same people).

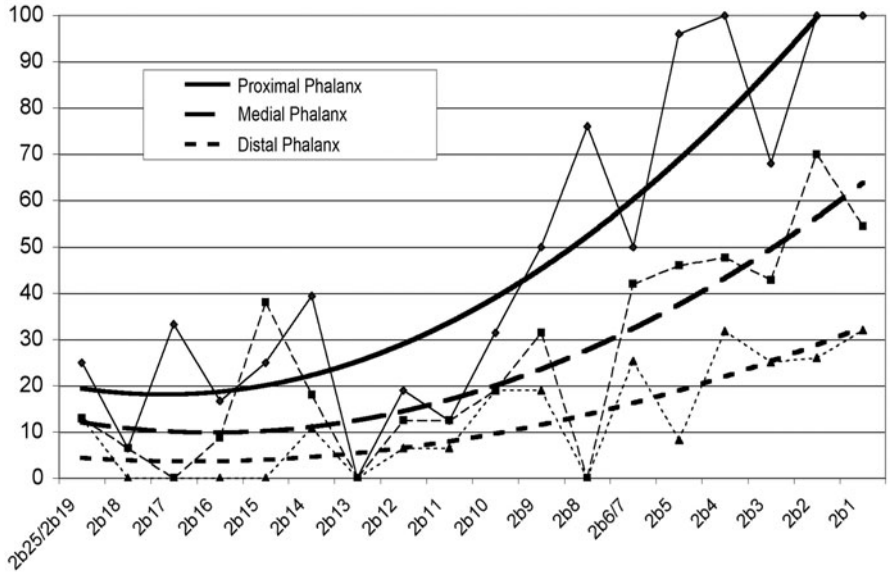

Fig. 6 Phalanx representation (Minimum Anatomical Unit (MAU) percentage) of juvenile and adult individuals of QS3. (After Elkin 1996)

reoccupations that have mined the ruins for building materials, in the lower areas of the Antofalla basin, there are several visible groups that seem to repeat, in a different topography, the association of houses and irrigation networks. Although I have not initiated any excavations at these sites, architectural surveys and surface recollections make it possible to consider Antofalla as a parallel and similar development to that of Tebenquiche Chico.

Now, I want to return to the Quebrada Seca 3 archaic sequence from where Elkin (1996) provided a detailed analysis of its bone assemblages. It is interestingly enough that the QS3 data show an increase of vicuña bones versus llama/guanaco bones. While vicuña bones have the major representation along the entire sequence, in late Holocene times vicuña bones reached nearly 95 % of the assemblage (Elkin 1996, p. 320). Alongside this significant pattern, I will point out another, no less significant. In 2b9 and 2b8 levels (ca. 6000–5000 calBP) there is a significant increase in the relative representation of phalanges in each camelid set (Fig. 6; Elkin 1996, p. 258 sq.).

If these phalanges belonged to vicuñas, as the data suggests, it seems that the attitudes towards vicuña feet (and also towards vicuñas), changed dramatically during the sixth millennium BC. While the search for domestication has been focused on the creation of the llama as a domestic item, and was thus interpreted according to technically diverse specific identifications, it could be possible that QS3 data shows some recategorization of the vicuña within the context of domesticity. What is unfortunately not shown in QS3 is in what way this could be linked to the houses.

Fig. 7 Foci or meat caches in Archibarca

While the search for open Archaic and Early Formative sites with architecture has kept some colleagues and me busy and has given different results, I want to show, in order to end this discussion, some pictures of my own search in Archibarca.

Archibarca is a high basin with a beautiful name and much more beautiful landscape framed by huge volcanoes. In the last three summers, it has been one of the focuses of my research team. A complete intensive survey revealed the existence of 361 sites, most of which tell the long history of interaction between humans and vicuñas. There are *parapets* or *trenches*, sometimes isolated and sometimes clustered. Trenches are located in irregular topography so as not to be visible from at least one direction, even when one is almost next to them.

Sometimes, these trenches are associated with other types of sites, which could be called *stone foci* or *meat caches*. They consist of a few rocks piled up without much order, often associated with basalt, obsidian, or opal nuclei, sometimes with flaking debris nearby (Fig. 7). These caches are usually found in relatively flat topography and are highly visible at the distance, in spite of not having considerable heights. Once, a package of leather, wool, and llama and vicuña, and a *chimpu* or flower made with dyed wool, was found under the stones of a focus.

Sometimes, trenches and hiding places are in turn, associated with lines. These consist of alignments of stones of medium size, placed every meter or two, forming segments. Each segment is continued in another or more than one; although among segments, one can find, most of the times, three larger blocks forming a triangle. The lines are usually found in low-lying areas along the bottom of canyons or wide and gentle slopes (Fig. 8). Extensive lithic scatters have been demarcated in areas closer to springs. Sources of opal, chalcedony, basalt, obsidian, quartz, and other raw materials were detected.

Other types of sites that have been found are the ones that, for the moment, are called *boxes*, near the lagoon, and *paved roads* or *tablelands*, in low areas or coast areas, usually nearby meadows. It is clear that it will take a long time to even imagine such the sense of such a rich annotation of the landscape, but so far it seems pretty

Fig. 8 Line from Archibarca

Fig. 9 Ab1 site

clear that humans and vicuñas have been the main characters of a long history of conversations.

Ab1, located by an andesite outcrop that shelters from the strong winds (Fig. 9), is a site where a 1 ha intensive surface recollection was completed.

A primary analysis of the distribution of more than 40,000 lithic finds (including 153 spearheads) and 124 ceramic sherds surface collected showed that there were areas of differential deposition, areas of possible presence of structures and areas of most likely recent disturbance. A stratigraphic excavation of around 100 m^2, still unfinished, is revealing at least two things, the importance of vicuña and the demarcation of architectural features. Among the latter, a series of slab alignments

Fig. 10 Archaeological excavation in Ab1

Fig. 11 Slab structure in Ab1

arranged edgewise define internal spaces, sheltered by the escarpment, from external spaces, far from it (Figs. 10 and 11). A series of linear excavations with slab remains within, allow the reconstruction of a long sequence of buildings, dismantling, and reconstructions of the structure contours. In the internal spaces, extremely thin layers of red dyed sand (the black contribution of the outcrop, the gray contribution of hearths) also suggest that the occupations on this site have been many, repeated, and impermanent. The great number (reaching several hundred) of complete and/or broken projectile heads, recovered both from the surface and from stratighaphy, but mainly in the outer space beyond the architectural feature and the presence of vicuña bones, suggest that this site is not anomalous in the landscape I roughly presented. A date obtained on charcoal from a small preliminary survey resulted in $2{,}335 \pm 70$ BP (A10682). A second date obtained on charred *Adesmia* sp. collected from an accumulation of charcoal (context 187) resulted in $6{,}020 \pm 80$ BP (LP1540). The morphology of projectile heads and pottery retrieved, although very scarce, suggests

that it is quite probable that it is a site with occupations spanning a very long time, from the Archaic to at least the first millennium AD.[7]

To sum up, I would like to return to Sherratt's suggestion, if such a thing at this point is not too pretentious. It could be that the different cases and things I have written and shown here were understood in favor of his presumption that *agricola est quem domus demonstrat*. We have to remember that for Sherratt this also means that the social takes precedence over the biological, at least based on the relationship between the legal father and marriage. The ontological difference between society and nature, between culture and biology, is thus consecrated in the same point where the author renounces the dialectic. Only assuming that agriculture is a phenomenon essentially linked to the biological reproduction of the species, it can be seen as antecedent or consequent to a social phenomenon. And only supposing society as essentially preexisting, we could see the houses as a social artifact and not, as often happens in life, as the arena where social relationships are created.

In this story, the houses point at the peasants, not because they are or they are not farmers, but because the houses are privileged arenas for the creation and recreation of domestic relationships with other human and nonhuman beings. It is in the flowing of these heterogeneous networks of relationships, as described by the concept of *uywaña*, that the people, the houses, the things, the land, take an active part in the worlds of peasant life. *Uywaña est quem domus demonstrat*.

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[7] Research in Archibarca is still in progress. Exploration and survey of some areas have to be broadened to some areas and the excavation of Ab1, where the baseline levels have not yet been reached, has to be continued. Therefore, the information presented here is but the first impression of an area that will involve more efforts in research and with them new and different visions.

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Social Space and the Archaeology of Inequality: Insights into Social Differences at Ambato Valley, Southern Andes, Argentina

Andrés Laguens

Introduction

One way of characterizing social inequality in archaeology has been based on the differential distribution and access to goods or resources (McGuire 1983; McIntosh 1999; Paynter and McGuire 1991), together with new power relations created in the maintenance of the structural asymmetry thus generated, frequently associated with a more diverse and heterogeneous society (e.g., Fried 1967; McGuire 1983). Thus, one remarkable issue is that social inequality, as an analytical category, is directly associated with social complexity (Blanton 1994; McGuire 1983; McGuire and Saitta 1998; Rowlands 1989; Tainter 1988) and, as such, a consequence of evolutionary processes of heterogeneity and growing differentiation that would result in a stratified organization. These processes embrace not only the social realm but also other diverse material and immaterial spheres.

From this, the relationship between inequality and complexity has been such that, by opposition, egalitarian societies signify simple societies, i.e., societies with a technological repertoire of low diversity and a simple social organization where differences in sex, age, or functions are not significant enough as to establish them as a permanent differentiation. Social complexity not only became an equivalent to more development and evolution but also turned out to be its measurement.

Currently, these dichotomies have been partly surmounted and it has been accepted that the world is in itself complex. Therefore, not only politically segmented and hierarchical political organizations are understood as complex societies, but also hunter-gatherers are considered as having ways of living that maintain differences among people as well as they hold more complex webs of relationships and more diversified technological systems than those previously upheld. Nevertheless, this social or organizational complexity not necessarily implies social inequality.

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Still, a definition of social inequality based only on differential access to resources is not only very close to the Western (if not capitalist) conceptualization, associated with an idea of personal possessions, but also limits inequality to the economic realm. We sustain that social differentiation as well as social inequality are both relational concepts, which describe relative positions of individuals in a multidimensional space of multiple, simultaneous, and dynamic variables and interactions. We propose to go beyond that limited definition of social inequality and consider it in terms of a combination of diverse resources—material and nonmaterial—in different contexts of human and nonhuman interactions.

Thus, we put forth a different understanding of the concept of inequality, defined theoretically from a relational perspective and sustained empirically through archaeological analysis of the volume and structure of resources available for individuals or groups of individuals (Laguens 2006b). Likewise, we analyze the possibility of applying the concepts of field and social space (Bourdieu 1986, 1988) to examine past social differentiation. From this perspective, we advance a theoretical approximation to human groups or social aggregates (i.e., "classes" in the traditional sense, see later) according to the relative positions of individuals or groups of individuals in such social space. A quali–quantitative methodology is employed to define such social space and social fields from the archaeological record, while a case from the northern Andes of Argentina will illustrate this proposal.

Differentiation and Inequality

At this point, the scope of some terms used herein must be explained, since they can appear "discordant" in an archaeological context, and also because in other instances, their scope needs to be widened or shortened.

We should first distinguish differentiation from inequality. Differentiation is concerned with the properties of things: it is active, relational, and relative, and as long as it is based on the perception of similarities and dissimilarities, builds alterity and has historicity. Inequality also refers to properties of things and it is relational, but in comparative and distributive terms; therefore, it tends to be absolute and fixed—but not less active—even though it is also relative.

In these senses, there will always be differences among people, and these differences will be defined depending on specific contexts of interaction and categorization (as the differences considering genre, age, status, occupation, skills, knowledge, experience, etc.), like the case of chiefs or leaders among hunter–gatherers, or the differences between a pastor and potter in a stratified society. Once the parameters of comparison have been socially defined, the already mentioned differences can turn into inequalities, since they are parameters that include not only a relative scale but also values and measures of comparison, such as quantity, variety, quality of certain resources, or properties. Besides, such scale can be continuous or segmented and hierarchical.

Social inequality might have been a past category, but it is commonly used as a category from the observer's point of view, at least at the initial stages of a research. It is closer to an etic category and can be recovered from the archaeological record as long as the social differences are supposed to have been written down materially, either as the specific diacritic elements of each social aggregate or as the material-world structuring structures. Considering this, archaeologists have traditionally taken the access to resources as a parameter of inequality and its quantity as a measure of comparison. Thus, from the properties of the archaeological record, social inequalities are supposed to be observed by analyzing the quantity of goods in graves or differences in the diets or variations in the size of habitat space.

An interesting aspect is to observe how the differentiating principles turn into inequalities among people. Therefore, it is important to define those differentiating principles and determine the sets of properties that are distinctive in the social universe, and if possible, to establish the structures, means, and processes which institutionalized these characteristics, i.e., how the difference is socially incorporated through distinctive practices.

It must be noted that such characteristics would not be limited to isolated objects or features, and would rather be involved in the total differential material conditions of existence. This implies the existence of various levels of cleavage that in ensemble establish different possibilities of existence for individuals, as stated by Briones (1998, p. 106) in the sense that this

> . . . presupposes basically to state how the prevailing power dynamics makes differentiated sectors to have different possibilities of generalizing, preserving or selectively assigning goods, services and meanings that are put at stake by this cleavages, according to some occupy—actively or passively—hegemonic positions and others subordinate ones.

All of these considerations will allow us to consider the existence of social differences established as inequalities, which delimitate differentiated social collectives or aggregates within specific socioeconomic and political formations, as the ones observed in the case study herein analyzed.

Classes and Resources in the Archaeological Record

In general, in archaeology, social differences have always been considered as the characteristic of nonegalitarian or stratified social organizations. These differences, in one way or another, are supposedly embodied in the bearers and as such, in their material practices, which allow to group them into different social aggregates—or implicit "social classes"—each with its own properties in common. These shared properties are determined as sets of diagnostic attributes observed in particular archaeological records. In fact, they are characterizations such as hierarchical and nonhierarchical groups, groups of elite and nonelite, status differences, factions, chiefs, subordinated groups, or distinctions according to access to power, key resources, or sumptuary goods.

This perspective, beyond the fact that it involves the risk of a static typological classification, also rests strongly upon a definition of inequality centered on the quantity and quality of resources available to people. We think that this problem is far more complex, since to the volume and properties, we must also add the resource structure and the web of social relations present in different contexts of interaction. These will characterize the material configurations of the existence of past social aggregates.

As mentioned earlier (Laguens 2004, 2006b), in these contexts of interaction, a multiplicity of material and immaterial dimensions participate in sustained and durable arrangements, which will determine—and in turn be determined by—the resource distribution among individuals and groups, who take part in different social spheres or fields (Bourdieu 1986, 1988).

In this study, we advance a way to examine the inequality among people from a relational perspective, considering the position of individuals in a multidimensional relational space, where his/her position would be determined by both the volume and structure of available resources—in its wider sense—and those effectively used and possessed. The closeness of different people in such multidimensional social space will enable to define group of individuals who share some common properties and dispositions, and not others; therefore, we will be able to establish comparison parameters to define social aggregates based on relative positions. We sustain that the archaeological record has the potential to carry out this sort of analysis, if we are able to determine the different resources domains—or capitals, in Bourdieu's terms—and study their distribution in various ways of life, such as hierarchical or nonhierarchical, hunter–gatherer, or productive societies. Likewise, the capital domains at stake in a society could highlight the existence of struggling spaces or different social fields, whose reproduction and diversification in time may help to characterize different ways of life as well as greater complexity.

It is necessary to make clear at this point the term, resource. It is not only about the economic or subsistence media but also a wider range of material and immaterial things, which include as well cultural, social, and symbolic dimensions—such as power, prestige, knowledge, or even time—embodied as immaterial resources. This use of resource is based on Bourdieu's idea of capital (1979, 1988), but we also considered the limitations imposed by the archaeological record or current knowledge state. Capital implies a performed appreciation, a preestablished category that is well known by others in a given social context, has an accumulative value and power, which is normally difficult to catch in the archaeological record. As it is difficult to determine the extent of accumulation and social value of a certain type of resource as capital in those senses, we decided to consider the term resource as everything that implies a potential to access, use, accumulation, and possibly appreciation.

It is sensible to differentiate the terms "access" and "use" of capital or resources. The term "access" refers to the individual set of potentially mobilizable resources, whereas the term "use" refers to the actions and mobilizations of resources by individuals (van der Gaag and Snijders 2005, p. 2). In turn, these two aspects gain a relational dimension, political and social, as the resources available to individuals is not a question of supply, but are a function of others who have various types of

resources and the will of those others to provide access to these resources. This consideration poses a problem with respect to the feasibility to recover individual access and the use of resources from the archaeological record. Therefore, we decided to work with an inclusive scale that considers resource management by individuals as long as they are a part of a collective that share some properties and dispositions in common.

By considering the different interacting contexts and the social world as a multidimensional space with people simultaneously acting in different realms and material spheres, there would be a web of relations where individuals will not have a fixed position, but rather a relative one. This concept defines what Bourdieu (1990) calls *social space*, built from the properties acting in it.

Within the social space, each agent's or group of agents' position will be defined in terms of the volume of resources, capital, or power that the individuals have and in terms of its relative composition, i.e., considering the relative distributions of material and embodied immaterial resources. Therefore, the more similar the volume of the resources composition that the individuals have, the greater will be the properties that they share and the greater will be their distinctions as a group in a social space. However, the boundaries of these groups may not be net, because there will always be people in the intermediate positions, and groups may be isolated with more internal coherence and external isolation than others, which would signal discontinuities in the social net.

Consequently, from the archaeological record, we would be able to approach the social space by analyzing the resources properties, the variety of managed resources, the volume or quantity of those resources, the sets composition, their established relations, and their distribution in the physical space, and if possible, in time as well.

Following Bourdieu's idea, it can be stated that by knowing the space of positions, we can define classes—in its logical sense, not actual—as

> . . . groups of agents that hold similar positions and that, under similar situations and subject to similar conditions, have all the possibilities of having similar interests and dispositions and therefore of producing distinctive practices and a similar decision-making position. (Bourdieu 1990, p. 284)

The term "class" associated with the social sphere appears unseasonable (as well as up to the very idea of society in anthropology and sociology today; see Ingold 1996, Latour 2005). In current archaeology, and other social areas like anthropology, there is a resistance to implement this term either because of the risk of typological use or because of the supposed limitations of the archaeological record. In this study, we limit the consideration of "class" as a polythetic aggregate of entities that have common characteristics, i.e., a theoretical definition—classes do not exist as such, but as constructions or, as referred by Bourdieu, as "class on paper" or "class on the record":

> They have a theoretical existence peculiar to theories as long as they are product of an explicit classification comparable with the theory used by zoology and botany. Similarly, this classification allows us to explain and to foresee the practices and characteristics of classified objects and group behavior. (Bourdieu 1990, p. 284)

Social Fields

Following the introduction of social space, people and resources, the term *social field* can be included. The relations between agents' positions in the social space and the classes of capital at stake define different *fields*, as systems of positions and objective relations among the said positions. "Field" refers to a structured space of positions, which has certain linked characteristics, principles, and regularities. These characteristics, principles, and regularities can be analyzed independently from those that fit into the said field (Bourdieu 1990; Gutiérrez 1995, 2003). Initially, the classes of capital that are at stake in the interrelations of people are used to determine the different field classes like the religious, political, economic fields, etc. Initially, the classes of capital at stake in the interrelationships between people will define different kinds of fields—such as the religious, the political, the economic—but only as long as they were constituted historically by the struggles of interests on these forms capital and not a definition piori:

> A field structure is a state—in terms of *historical moment*—of distribution in a given time, and of a specific capital at stake. It is an accumulative capital obtained from previous struggles that guides the agents' strategies engaged in the field and that can adopt different shapes such as social, cultural, symbolic capital, and each of its subspecies. (Gutiérrez 2003, p. 10; italics is the original)

Although these fields share certain common general principles, each field has its own logic, autonomy, and hierarchy in accordance with the capital that is at stake (Gutiérrez 1995).

Bourdieu (1988, 1990) considered that the position of an agent in a social space can be defined with respect to the position of the individual in the different fields in which he/she is a part, in relation to the global volume and the composition or structure of the capitals at stake and depending on the relative weight of the said species in the total volume:

> In each social space and in every time, the shape adopted by the set of the distributions of the different capital species (embodied or materialized) as appropriation instruments of the objectified product of the accumulated social work defines the state of the power relations institutionalized in a long-lasting social *status*, which are socially recognized or juridically guaranteed, among agents objectively defined by their position in those relations. (1990, pp. 283–284; italics in the original)

Social Space and Inequality

On the whole, by considering our initial idea and the archaeological record as the record of the material conditions of existence, we could presume the combination of all the resources as converging and flowing within the different contexts of interaction in a multiplicity of material and immaterial dimensions, interacting in certain lasting and upholding dispositions. These lasting and upholding dispositions would establish

and will be determined by the resources distribution between the people and the groups within the different fields in which they occur.

However, from the volume and structure characterization of the resources distribution or capitals available and in force, certain relative positions of the people or groups of people in a social space could be defined, which would allow a theoretical approximation of groups or social classes characterized by characteristics they have in common as long as they share close positions in the social space.

If we consider individuals sharing common characteristics, we could then assume the differentiation principles as those from the properties that some individuals or group of individuals have (and those they do not have), and that define their position in the multidimensional and multirelational space of the social life (Bourdieu 1990). Accordingly, we could consider objective classes as "a group of agents in homogeneous conditions of existence that impose homogeneous conditionings and produce homogeneous systems of dispositions, appropriate to engender similar practices" (Bourdieu 1979, p. 100).

As established earlier (Laguens 2004, 2006b), from the point of the generation and analysis of the archaeological record, if agents in similar positions, located at similar contexts, took decisions and carried over similar practices, we could expect regularities and differences in the archaeological context with respect to those similar social positions—in an analogical way, it slightly resembles the idea of *differential participation* by Binford (1962). However, in terms of interpretation, similar material dispositions could not only be a product of similar practices but also, and fundamentally, the product of actions performed by agents in similar positions in social space. Subsequently, the differentiated distribution of the material resources in the archaeological record could also provide information about the structure of the distribution of resources and the relative positions of the people in the social space, and thus, about the existence of differences and inequalities between the people and groups of people. In this study, a methodological approach is presented to analyze, from the archaeological record, social inequality— and potentially, social differentiation. Subsequently a brief illustration of a case of study in the Andean region of Northwestern Argentina is given.

Methodology of Analysis

As a general approach, the proposed methodology is based on a qualitative–quantitative procedure to define the social space from the archaeological record. Basically, the methodology consists of the material assets distribution or different capital types (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic, or any other type to be defined), statistical analysis in different contemporary sites, following an analogue methodology to Bourdieu's proposal in *The distinction* for the group of French workers and intellectuals in the 1960s (Bourdieu 1979).

For that purpose, the quantitative and qualitative variables to be considered were first defined. They are considered as potential resources, which can be recovered in

different scales of the archaeological record. In our case study, we considered five groups of elements for each site: the space, material culture, economic resources, work investment, and cultural capital; however, we could also consider some others in accordance with each case, each problem, and the properties of the record.

Within each one of these categories, some cases of quantitative and qualitative variables were isolated, including different estimates and data combinations, such as abundance, size, volume, minimal number of individuals, variety, and representativeness, i.e., mainly the observable or measurable properties of the record, as seen in our case study.

From this descriptive information on data, a basic matrix was created to analyze the resources' relative proportions in each site (relative volume) and the distribution of the resources (structure of the distribution). Subsequently, the data were subjected to multivariate analyses. Particularly, in our case study, we made an aggregation analysis using a cluster analysis, and subsequently, a principal components analysis (PCA) from a correlation matrix, to discover the data structure, the set of resources grouping, as well as the weight and the relative distribution of each of them in a multidimensional and multirelational space.

However, it is necessary to assume that the implemented procedures are used in an exploratory way, since we initially ignored each resource potential as a capital type and avoided awarding a relative weight or a rank a priori, which consequently resulted in the necessity to make several scans until the matrix was purified and examined for the optimal solution. As a result, different levels and varieties of information were obtained. The data organization in a matrix per se provided data about the distribution of the types of resources and their volume, both in the horizontal and vertical readings, expressed in absolute as well as relative frequencies, and when converted into a correlation matrix, provided similar results. The multivariate analysis provided information about how the different capital types are grouped, how they are distributed by site or geographical space, and about the most important variables. In the resulting graphics, we can also visualize the resource distribution and subsequently, the associated properties, as if it were a bidimensional representation of the social space (Fig. 2).

In this way, the composition of the different resource domains, their differential distribution in different volumes, and their relative distribution structure allowed us to approach the social space, determining its degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity, the continuities or discontinuities in the resulting aggregates for sharing elements in common as well as approaching the different fields of validity.

The latter ones, in particular, might need an additional diachronic analysis, and hence, we examined the different types of resources in a time trajectory to estimate the field's historicity, if there were effective capitals involved, and if there were any, then the effective capitals and how the individuals differentially take part in those capital were examined. Specifically, we assumed that one of the intervening factors in the processes of social inequality was the existence of new capital varieties that come into play as new social fields, in which not all the people could participate, given the differences in the access and the use of the resources as defined earlier (Laguens 2004).

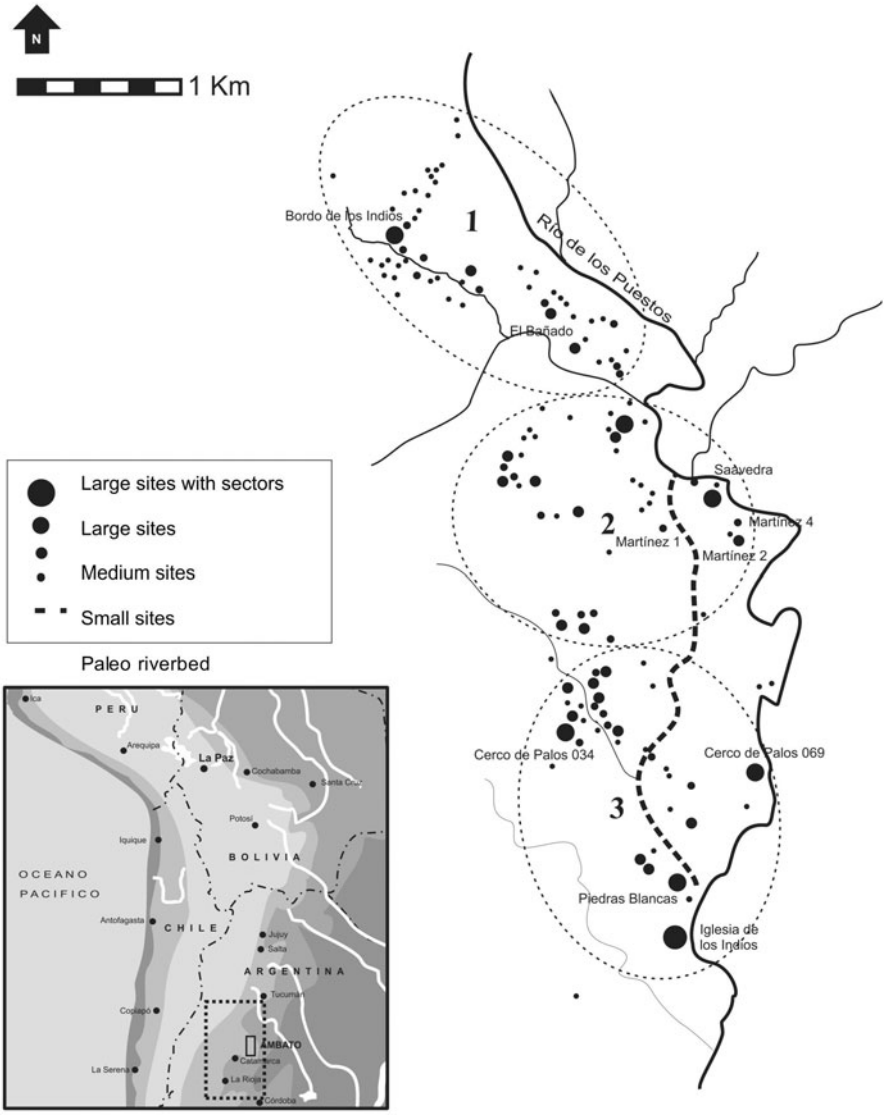

Fig. 1 The Valle de Ambato at the Andean region of Argentina. *Dots* signal different sites and their relative size. *Dotted circles* correspond to the three main settlement systems of the valley

A Case Study: The Ambato Valley in the First Millennium AD

To exemplify this proposal, we summarized an already carried-out investigation that showed a case study of the emergence of social inequality in the Argentinean Northwest, taking the example of the Aguada societies from the Valle de Ambato

(Ambato Valley), Catamarca (Fig. 1), between the sixth and eleventh century AD (Laguens 2004, 2007).

We believe that in the recent years, the topic of social inequality, its origin, development, and institutionalization was considered as an important problem to study. For studying social inequality, excavations and different analyses to satisfy the aim of this study was carried out. This analysis added up information to several earlier works in this area carried out by the same team for many years, which was interrupted by the last military dictatorship (Heredia 1998; Pérez and Heredia 1987; Assandri et al. 1991).

This study took the Aguada culture, in particular, as a key case of analysis, since, till date, it appears as one of the first manifestations of the Argentinean Northwest, in which the said processes have reached a significant and lasting development, including several geographic areas, each one with modalities of its own, establishing links that go beyond this regional realm as well. Likewise, el Valle de Ambato, in particular, till date, appears as one of the places in which this lifestyle was initially carried out.

As mentioned earlier (Laguens 2000), in the previous works, we tried to determine whether it was possible to consider Aguada as a nonegalitarian type of social organization, taking into account other variables and methodologies of analysis relevant to this problem (Assandri and Laguens 2003; Laguens and Juez 1999; Marconetto 2002), since we found that historically, the Aguada characterization as a complex society—and by transition, differentiated—has always been an inference that started, and was based on their handcraft production quality, mainly pottery, which was stunning because of its richness and iconographic complexity in the decorative style. The assumption is that such handcraft mastery (also observable in the metallurgy and other not so abundant items, such as wooden and bone objects) would only be attained if there are certain social-complexity degrees which, by definition, indicate the division of labor in specializations.

Though this is a likely probability, in archaeology, this assumption works almost as a theoretical and methodological principle, and we infer that the degree of uncertainty of this assumption for the specific Aguada case would not allow us to make progress in other investigation fields, until we obtained certain degree of trust regarding how the lifestyle in Ambato was, and the extent to which we could speak of a differentiated and internally heterogeneous society.

Concerning Aguada in general, as an entity or an Argentinean Northwest archaeological culture, this assumption, supported by the technological and stylistic aspects, has been subsequently considered as a starting point for (by extension) the conception of a complex organization to be projected towards other material aspects. This way, it extended the scope of complexity from all those related to the funerary rites, political organization, economy, or architecture, to other varied material productions, which definitively ended up refeeding a characterization in a circular way, which—though probably was quite correct—was highly intuitive and not tested. The striking point though is concerned with a complex organization, which by definition implies inherent inequalities in the society (Aguada), in each of its instances of regional manifestations, usually being taken as a homogeneous whole in which the society is

described and characterized around fixed and typological categories, valid for every member of this society (cf. González 1998). In this way, the complexity becomes another descriptive element when a culture characterization takes place, along with pottery, settlement system, or chronology.

From the data sources related to the material culture, economy, ideology, and society, we can presume the current state of knowledge of Aguada at the Valle de Ambato in the following synthesis: we know that in the Valle de Ambato there was a recorded rise in an internally differentiated society lasting from the fifth century AD until the eleventh century of our age, which was characterized by the hegemonic presence of the Aguada archaeological culture in the whole region (including almost three Argentinean provinces territories, namely, centre and south of Catamarca, La Rioja, and perhaps the north of San Juan) (Gambier 2000; Kriscautzky 2000a, 2000b; Kriscautzky and Togo 2000; Manasse 2000). At the beginning, the economy of production for subsistence was centered on farming and complementary activities such as gathering, hunting, and South American camelid breeding, with differential access and/or distribution (Bonnin 2006). By the end of the occupation (ca. 900 AD), the production was centered on an agro-pastoralist organization, which combined both practices in a single productive strategy of corn and llamas (*Lama glama*) (Figueroa et al. 2010). The resource catchment area was expanded to different ecologic areas towards the East and the West, with a 1-day walking distance (Marconetto 2002). The material goods distribution indicated specialization and standardization with differences in work investment (Laguens and Juez 1999; Fabra 2006). Together with social differentiation conditions, we detected a population increase and, among other material indicators, there was a sharp cultural building of the space, which exhibited a complex and differentiated residential pattern with houses grouped as small villages, monumental constructions (Callegari et al. 2000; Gordillo 2009), building of infrastructure works, together with variations in density and classes of domestic places. Around 300 constructions have been registered in the valley (Assandri 2001; Caro 2006; Assandri and Laguens 2003). Furthermore, we can state that the material culture acquired new symbolic dimensions, in accordance with a dominant ideology (Gordillo and Kusch 1987; Kusch 2000), whose range was not limited to the Ambato Valley and the influence area of Aguada, but went beyond the borders and was integrated regionally in an extensive geographic field of the South Andes, including links with regions like San Pedro de Atacama Oasis and the Bolivian plateau (Pérez 1994).

In this state of knowledge, together with the perspective that comparatively offers the latest advancements in the knowledge of Aguada in other areas of Argentina (see synthesis in Laguens 2006a), we can conclude with some degree of certainty that Aguada, particularly in Ambato, was at least a society that was markedly different among its components, but was more heterogeneous than its predecessors in that same place (Laguens 2007). This was an innovative social and political organization at that time and region that included the modification of the relationship between the people, things, and nature (Laguens and Gastaldi 2008). It was a new lifestyle associated with the economy intensification, diversification of the social roles, and larger definition of inequality among people, probably inherited (Pérez et al. 2000).

It is in this context that we took the structure of the distribution of resources in the population of Ambato between the fifth and the tenth century AD as an objective of our study, to characterize a past social space, so as to theoretically define the social groups based on people's position in this space. For this purpose, we worked with qualified and reliable information obtained from excavation as well as systematic and controlled surface data collections of the 22 sites, by taking into consideration 27 qualitative–quantitative variables for each case.

These sites are representative of the four kinds of settlement units identified for the valley (Fig. 1) by size, location, and building techniques—Class 1 of small sites, Class 2 of medium sites, Class 3 of large and very large sites, with or without sectors (Assandri 2001; Assandri and Laguens 2003), whose basic function in common was that of the housing units. Very large sites also had ceremonial functions. The resources considered for each site included five major groups of elements: space, material culture, economic resources, investment in labor, and cultural capital. Within each of these categories, the qualitative and quantitative variables were isolated in some cases, including different combinations of data and estimates as abundance, size, volume, minimum number of individuals, variety, and representativeness.

In the three main types of identified places, with respect to the space, the built surface, building techniques diversity, roofed area, amount of rooms, and patios were considered, along with the relative labor investment in each constructive technique with respect to the site surface (Barale 2005). On the other hand, with respect to the material culture, pottery and metal were taken into consideration. In the former, we took into account the types of diversity, considering three main technical groups (Aguada, plain ware, and others) (Laguens 2003) and the quantity of minimal storage volume per vessels (Pazzarelli 2006). For the metals, we took into consideration the quantity, variety, and types of artifacts (Espósito 2005). Regarding economic resources, we included fauna and vegetables. In the first case, we took into consideration the minimal number of individuals, the total number of specimens, and the minimal anatomic unities. For the vegetables, we considered the diversity of wooden species (Marconetto 2004). On the other hand, the work investment was measured in different ways in each place according to different kinds of items: handcraft investment in the ceramic types (Fabra 2002a, b, 2005), and costs and energy investment for quality and gross floor area unit in architecture (Barale 2005). Finally, as cultural capital, the iconography was considered as the expression of a symbolic dimension, analyzing and quantifying the variety of motives in each place and the complexity of those motives (Laguens 2004).

Given the exploratory nature of this approach, several runs of statistical analysis were carried out to debug the matrix and find the optimal solution. Finally, a subsample of 12 sites and 20 variables was selected that had more information and allowed consideration of the maximum reliability in the record. Table 1 shows a data matrix that represents the *resources structure* in terms of the present relative percentage of each resource type in the different sites that have been considered. This table provides an idea of the accumulation possibilities and the weight of each of the present resource types in each site. Thus, for example, we can observe that with respect to the patios or courtyards surface (Resource 10), each of the many places had 4 % of this

Table 1 Data matrix of the resources structure in terms of the relative percentage of each resource type in the different sites

Resource No.	Resources	Places											
		Small and medium					Large		Very large				
		CP68	M4	M1	CP73	SA18	SA24	M2	BDI	PB	GI16	CP69	IDI
1	Surface	0.37	0.38	0.53	0.74	1.02	1.11	1.77	12.09	12.43	13.36	*27.42*	*28.79*
2	Columns	4.33	5.87	*9.17*	4.64	4.47	6.99	6.46	*9.00*	*10.22*	2.62	*10.59*	*25.64*
3	Dry-stone wall	0.45	0.00	6.93	0.59	0.15	0.00	*16.69*	*16.37*	4.14	0.00	*16.93*	*37.75*
4	Walls	7.69	3.85	7.69	7.69	7.69	3.85	7.69	*11.54*	*11.54*	3.85	*11.54*	*15.38*
5	Roof surface	1.52	1.67	1.91	2.61	3.61	3.96	6.27	*21.26*	7.07	10.42	14.29	25.40
6	% ceiling	*12.97*	*14.07*	11.45	11.31	11.35	11.35	11.32	5.61	3.60	2.49	1.66	2.81
7	Areas	2.90	4.35	1.45	2.90	2.90	2.90	5.80	5.80	*14.49*	4.35	*15.94*	*36.23*
8	Courtyard	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	12.00	16.00	s/d	*20.00*	*24.00*
9	Area surface	1.45	1.60	1.83	2.50	3.45	3.78	5.99	*20.32*	11.19	9.96	13.66	24.28
10	Courtyards surface	0.95	0.93	1.40	1.97	2.71	2.97	4.73	13.48	11.14	s/d	5.87	*53.85*
11	Const. INV.	1.32	1.62	4.06	1.56	1.56	2.18	5.65	15.74	7.45	1.92	17.50	*39.45*
12	Aguada	2.42	2.61	2.87	3.68	12.74	0.00	9.48	*18.45*	14.42	10.03	23.30	s/d
13	Plain ware	*15.08*	12.49	10.34	10.94	*12.42*	4.61	12.71	2.25	8.06	10.49	0.61	s/d
14	Others	7.88	11.02	13.49	11.84	1.28	*23.68*	4.08	8.83	5.26	6.41	6.23	s/d
15	MNV	2.13	10.64	14.89	4.26	2.13	2.13	36.17	2.13	*21.28*	2.13	2.13	s/d
16	Vol Kg	2.13	10.64	14.89	4.26	2.13	2.13	36.17	2.13	*21.28*	2.13	2.13	s/d
17	LAB. INV. 1	2.60	2.81	3.09	3.95	13.69	0.00	10.18	*19.83*	15.49	3.31	*25.04*	s/d
18	LAB. INV. 2	*15.67*	12.97	10.75	11.37	12.90	4.79	13.20	2.33	8.38	7.01	0.63	s/d
19	LAB. INV. 3	7.06	9.88	12.10	10.61	1.15	*21.23*	3.66	7.92	4.72	16.08	5.59	s/d
20	Craft INV	7.97	8.32	8.60	8.53	8.82	9.22	8.63	*10.44*	9.48	9.09	*10.90*	s/d

CP68 Cerco de Palos 68, *M4* Martínez 4, *M1* Martínez 1, *CP73* Cerco de Palos 73, *SA18* Saavedra 18, *SA24* Saavedra 24, *M2* Martínez 2, *BI* Bordo de los Indios, *PB* Piedras Blancas, *GI16* Giles 16, *CP69* Cerco de Palos 69, *IDI* Iglesia de los Indios *Const. INV* Construction Investment, *INV* Investment, *MNV* Minimal Number of Vessels, *Vol Kg* Volume in Kilograms, *LAB. INV* Labor Investment, *Craft INV* Craft Investment

resource, though there were two cases in which there was > 20 % of this resource, both of which simultaneously presented the least percentage of covered area.

If we considered another type of resources, such as plain pottery (Resource 13), we can observe that one of the sites that had the larger "roof" resource showed one of the lowest volumes of this kind of pottery, though the storage capacity (Resource 16) was the same as that found in several places, having rough percentages of > 10 %.

Furthermore, from the vertical and horizontal reading of Table 1, we can also draw some inferences about the resources distribution structure in each place. Subsequently, we can see that this structure is varied and reflects the multidimensionality of the resources at stake.

If we consider the grouping of sites by their size, we can observe that the properties of resources are variables within each class, and each of them will be characterized by different and possibly differential properties. However, we can distinguish a general trend towards greater concentration of resources on very large sites—these sites are those that present the highest values in most of the resources (identified in italics in Table 1), especially the variables referring to settlements—highlighting the size of the courtyards among them and the abundance of Aguada pottery. The larger sites have the highest values of the set in the availability of other classes of ceramics (not Aguada or plain), the quantity of pottery items and the storage volume, as well as investment in labor in the manufacture of these objects—a variable associated with the previous one. The smaller sites have the highest availability of plain pottery and, remarkably, the roofed surfaces.

These data were also analyzed in terms of the resources distribution structure according to the size of the sites, as shown in Table 2, where the left column (larger places) shows that these places accumulate > 50 % over the total of the resources in 12 of the 20 variables, with values that are not < 6 % for the remaining eight variables. Only in the case of the roofed areas, plain pottery, and other types, the small and medium places exhibit higher values, the larger places being those with larger storage quantity.

Table 3 shows a data matrix that incorporates the *resources volume* in terms of each class proportion in each particular site, i.e., considering 100 % of the total amount of resources found in each place, in a vertical reading of the matrix, which is ordered from left to right, according to the size of the sites, from the smallest to the largest. In this way, we can obtain a panorama of the relative importance of each resource type in each site. In addition, some tendencies and differences are also stressed (in italics)—in the very large sites, the dominant resources are the built space and variables associated with them, such as the building-work investment and patio surface. However, in the large sites, the tendencies are not so clear, while in the medium and small sites, the most accumulated resources are those related to pottery and associated work investment.

Furthermore, from the vertical and horizontal reading of Table 3, we can draw some inferences about the resources distribution structure in each place. We can also observe that in this case, a resource distribution exists that goes through several dimensions, in a heterogeneous way and in different combinations, suggesting a polythetic structure.

Table 2 Accumulated distribution of resources according to large type of places

Resource No.	Resources	Places		
		% VL places	% L places	% S and M places
1	Surface	*94.09*	2.88	3.03
2	Columns	*58.08*	13.44	28.48
3	Stone wall	*75.19*	16.69	8.12
4	Walls	53.85	11.54	34.62
5	Roof surface	*78.45*	10.23	11.33
6	% ceilings	16.17	22.67	*61.16*
7	Areas	*76.81*	8.70	14.49
8	Courtyards	*72.00*	8.00	20.00
9	Area surface	*79.40*	9.77	10.82
10	Courtyard surface	*84.34*	7.70	7.96
11	Const. INV.	*82.06*	7.83	10.12
12	Aguada	*66.20*	9.48	24.32
13	Plain ware	21.40	17.32	*61.28*
14	Others	*26.73*	27.76	*45.51*
15	MNV	27.66	*38.30*	34.04
16	Vol Kg	27.66	*38.30*	34.04
17	LAB. INV. 1	*63.68*	10.18	26.14
18	LAB. INV. 2	18.35	17.99	*63.66*
19	LAB. INV. 3	34.30	24.89	*40.81*
20	Craft INV	39.92	17.85	*42.23*

VL very large, *L* large, *M* medium, *S* small *Const. INV* Construction Investment, *INV* Investment, *MNV* Minimal Number of Vessels, *Vol Kg* Volume in Kilograms, *LAB. INV* Labor Investment, *Craft INV* Craft Investment

The resources distribution responds to a structure characterized by relative proportions of resources in which we can distinguish three reference groups, each one with distinct characteristics, defined by the dominant resource types that stress the heterogeneity in this particular configuration.

The basic data matrix was submitted to a grouping analysis by means of a nonhierarchical cluster analysis, using Euclidian distance (Fig. 2). As a result, we observed that when considering all the resources and the variables in ensemble, we tend to differentiate at least three significant aggregates. The most conspicuous and numerous groups were from most of the sites, including small and medium ones (such as Martínez-1, Martínez-2, Martínez-4, Cerco de Palos-68, Cerco de Palos-79, Saavedra-18, Saavedra-24, and Giles-16) with different degree of similarity. large and very large sites were isolated, such as Piedras Blancas by one side, and Iglesia de los Indios, Bordos de los Indios, and Cerco de Palos-69 by the other.

Through PCA, we submitted the data matrix to a statistic multivariate study that allowed us to represent the set of characters in a reduced hypothetical variables quantity, and the principal components obtained from a correlation matrix of the original data. The results obtained explain the 93.50 % of the existing variability in the first two components.

Table 3 Data matrix of the resources volume in terms of proportions in each particular site, considering 100 % of the total amount of resources found in each place

Resource No.	Resources	Places											
		Small and medium					Large		Very large				
		CP68	M4	M1	CP73	SA18	SA24	M2	BDI	PB	GI16	CP69	IDI
1	Surface	5.01	5.54	5.64	9.22	11.75	*11.84*	12.21	*37.66*	*44.76*	*45.45*	*60.50*	*62.53*
2	Columns	2.48	3.07	2.08	1.85	1.65	2.37	1.42	0.89	1.27	1.19	0.74	0.39
3	Stone wall	0.00	2.16	0.20	0.22	0.05	0.00	3.41	1.51	1.74	0.45	1.11	0.00
4	Walls	0.03	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01
5	Roof surface	1.55	1.41	1.61	2.30	2.94	2.96	3.04	4.66	2.78	1.82	2.22	3.43
6	% ceilings	0.91	0.59	0.96	0.69	0.64	0.59	0.38	0.09	0.02	0.06	0.02	0.06
7	Areas	0.09	0.02	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.09	0.08	0.05	0.03
8	Courtyards	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.02	s/d
9	Area surface	1.55	1.41	1.61	2.30	2.94	2.96	3.04	4.66	2.78	3.01	2.22	3.43
10	Courtyards surface	3.46	4.13	4.03	6.92	8.81	8.88	9.16	*11.78*	*23.50*	*11.44*	3.63	s/d
11	Const INV.	8.08	*16.03*	7.51	7.34	6.77	8.70	*14.66*	*18.42*	*23.04*	*10.23*	*14.51*	3.38
12	Aguada	0.25	0.22	0.27	0.34	1.08	0.00	0.48	0.42	s/d	0.38	0.37	0.34
13	Plain ware	1.60	1.05	2.20	1.32	1.39	0.47	0.85	0.07	s/d	0.28	0.01	0.47
14	Others	1.10	1.07	0.89	1.11	0.11	1.89	0.21	0.21	s/d	0.14	0.10	0.23
15	MNV	0.15	0.16	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.26	0.01	s/d	0.08	0.00	0.01
16	Vol Kg	8.84	9.83	2.02	3.34	1.55	1.42	*15.68*	0.42	s/d	4.89	0.29	0.63
17	LAB. INV. 1	3.79	3.30	3.98	5.03	*16.13*	0.00	7.16	6.28	s/d	5.77	5.62	1.58
18	LAB. INV. 2	*14.38*	9.45	*19.79*	*11.91*	*12.50*	4.26	7.63	0.61	s/d	2.56	0.12	2.75
19	LAB. INV. 3	*14.27*	*13.86*	*11.62*	*14.48*	1.45	*24.63*	2.76	2.69	s/d	1.88	1.34	*8.21*
20	Craft INV	*32.44*	*26.62*	*35.40*	*31.43*	*30.09*	*28.89*	*17.54*	*9.58*	s/d	*10.21*	*7.08*	*12.54*

CP68 Cerco de Palos 68, *M4* Martínez 4, *M1* Martínez 1, *CP73* Cerco de Palos 73, *SA18* Saavedra 18, *SA24* Saavedra 24, *M2* Martínez 2, *BI* Bordo de los Indios, *PB* Piedras Blancas, *GI16* Giles 16, *CP69* Cerco de Palos 69, *IDI* Iglesia de los Indios *Const. INV* Construction Investment, *INV* Investment,*MNV* Minimal Number of Vessels, *Vol Kg* Volume in Kilograms, *LAB. INV* Labor Investment, *Craft INV* Craft Investment

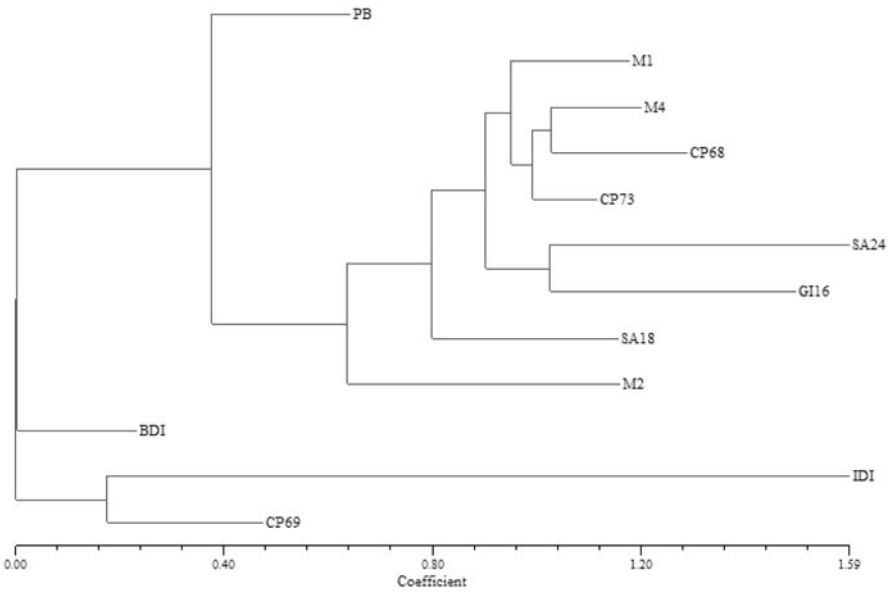

Fig. 2 Simplified model of the social space. Grouping analysis of sites according to the resources distribution structure according to the size of the sites, as shown in Table 2, by means of a nonhierarchical cluster analysis, using Euclidian distance

In Fig. 3, the first two components are represented in a multiplot, in which the cases and variables distribution around the first variation axis and their relative distribution in frequency histograms according to the sites' size can be observed. The rectangles show the names of the sites. It is a graphical representation of the multidimensional space of the conditions of the group of the cases studied, based on the distribution of the volume and structure of the different types of resources, i.e., a simplified model of the social space. The position of each group was determined by the set of characteristic features, where the closer they are located in the space, the greater are the features in common.

We can observe in the results that the previously stated tendencies were confirmed by other means, distinguishing at least two clear groupings and other intermediate sites between them as a possible third group. The sites at the upper side of the graphic are more grouped, which would imply a high positive correlation between the sites. In other words, we can observe that in sites, such as el Bordo de los Indios, Cerco de Palos 69 e Iglesia de los Indios—all being very large sites—a set of properties in common is shared with different weight or importance with respect to those that share the other sites among them, and which are, in time, those that differentiate them from the rest. The second grouping is focused on the lower-right area of the graphic, with high positive correlations, gathering small and medium sites (Martinez 4, Cerco de Palos 68, Martinez 1, Cerco de Palos 73, and Saavedra 18). The rest of the sites are grouped in a different way around the two variation axes separating two

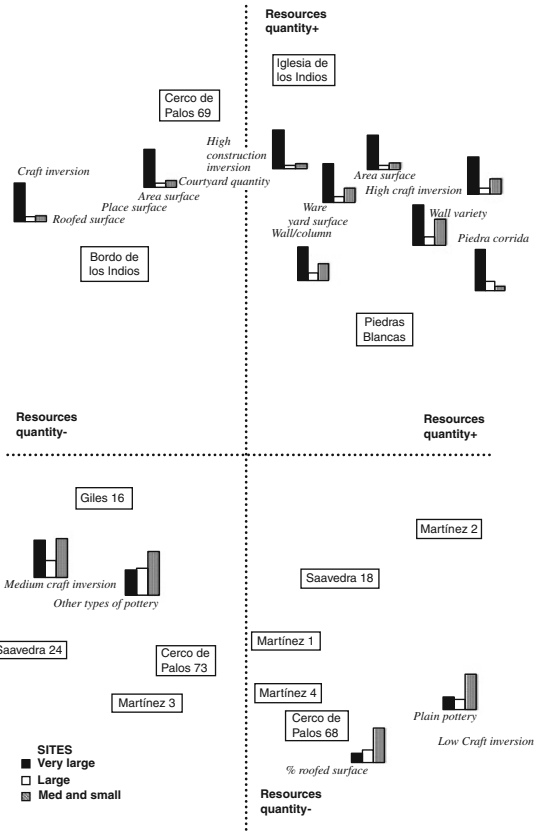

Fig. 3 Bidimensional multiplot with the first two components, showing cases and variables distribution around the first variation axis and their relative distribution in frequency histograms according to the size of the sites, based on the distribution of the volume and structure. The names of the sites are inside *rectangles*

sites with high positive correlation on one side (Saavedra 24 and Giles 16), and with two other sites (Martinez 2 and Piedras Blancas) without a high correlation between them, but located in different areas of the graphic, i.e., grouped by a different relative weight of the variables.

In the second dimension of the graphic, represented by each variable histogram, we can see that their distribution is based on the two main variation axes. In the upper area of the graphic, a wide series of variables is focused, close to a group of places, while in the lower area, the variables are more distributed. According to the statistic results, in the first component, the most important variables in absolute values are related to the building space and the work. In the second component, the most important variables are related to pottery, storage capacity, and handcraft investment in the ordinary and other classes.

We found that there were clear differences, the variables grouped the sites by its shared properties and, at the same time, differentiated them and marked discontinuities in the distribution of the resources in the social space, corresponding to very different sites, materiality scales, and resources types that have a series of contrasting

properties. We can consider the resources of the first component as personal properties in a big spatial scale, highly visible, of high obstruction, with a high energetic cost in its building and maintenance. They include a high volume of resources, from the raw material to the labor force for its construction, and as spatial entities and potential scenarios of a high variety of multiple practices. These properties imply elements with a strong communication potential, a high symbolic load of immediate denotation implying public display and power, in addition to the same structuring power of the practices that acquire the built area. On the other hand, the second component resources are characterized by properties that contrast with the previous ones, as it is composed of small-sized and mobile personal objects, when compared with the architectonic scale of the others of low or null obstruction, low work investment, low energy investment cost, and low volume of necessary resources for its construction. These are the properties that imply different functions from the other component that has a limited spectrum, with a low communicative potential with a restricted scope because of its visibility, though being the potential vehicles of a high symbolic load, such as the decorated pottery and accumulation capacity.

We can state that the quantity of resources emerges as a key differentiation factor. The amount of built space, the size of the constructions, and the quality of this space regarding the building techniques, the volume of handcraft investment, and the work behind this producing activity are stressed as key factors in this resource dimension. It is a qualitative–quantitative dimension that allows us to speculate about the potential of these resources playing a role in the past under different capital types, according to their valorization possibilities, production, distribution, accumulation, and consumption.

Final Comments

In this work, we attempted to analyze the potential application of the concepts of field and social space for the study of social differentiation in the past. With respect to the volume characterization and structure of the resources or capitals available, we proposed a qualitative–quantitative methodology for the definition of social space with the information from the archaeological record.

We wondered at the beginning about the role of the material in social differentiation, also on the logic of distribution and configuration in different dimensions of social interaction, along with its possibilities of archaeological analysis. Moreover, in the case study of Aguada societies in the valley of Ambato, we were interested to observe the processes and transformations that led to an order based on the difference between people, including the way in which the organization was sustained over time. To carry out this we worked with a relational approach, considering the volume, variety, and distribution of resources at stake, to discover its structure and subsequently define the universe of possible social positions, to finally characterize this as a social space.

We can state that in terms of resources managed, the volume emerged as a key factor in differentiating between different types of sites. Of these, the amount of built space, the size of buildings, the quality of that space for their building techniques, the volume of craft investment, and work behind this production stood out as important properties in this dimension of resources. This is a quantitative–qualitative dimension that allows us to presume the possibility that in the past, these key resources might have come into action under different forms of capital, as to their chances of valorization, production, distribution, accumulation, and consumption (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1995; Gutiérrez 1995; Flachsland 2003).

With respect to the form of distribution of these resources, it seems that capital structure were characterized by relative proportions, distinguished by three groups of reference, each with different properties, defined by the dominant classes of resources, which highlight the heterogeneity of this particular setup. Moreover, it is interesting to highlight this last feature, not only because it is consistent with the theoretical definitions of social complexity, but also owing to the polythetic character, acquiring certain definition of social inequality. However, we were unable to define the differences among individuals and groups of people from one class or two of the resources—for example, differences based on access to economic resource, or in the possession of the resource space—but there were various forms of resources (or capital) that coexisted simultaneously and were characterized differently with respect to each group for their properties, and not by its absence or owing to the reduced volume available. We observed the volume and structure of resources as two important descriptive dimensions in the characterization of social inequality. In particular, on analyzing the economy of resources, in terms of their properties and distribution, we believe that in Aguada at Ambato, the volume of resources managed was a key factor in differentiating people. In one group, space and built contexts became the resources with most relative weight in the materialization of social inequality, while the other one was the access to ceramic products and their storage capacity.

With respect to the social space, the multidimensional space is defined by the relative positions of the people in a network of relationships, according to the volume of capital or resources (material and immaterial) and its relative composition (or structure), where groups are distinguished based on its shared properties. These positions define classes, while theoretical constructions characterize different social groups that shared properties in common. In the case of Ambato, we could distinguish at least two clear groups, each occupying different positions in the social space, and two more intermediate groups. While the sample size is small to define two more classes from the last two, they can be in intermediate positions in relation to the fact that the limits of a class are never going to be net, but they are important in terms that mark the existence of gaps observable in the social space, allowing conceptualization of further discontinuities in the social space.

Earlier, a question was raised on (Laguens 2003, 2004) whether this distinction was based only on the quantity of goods or accumulated materialities—from artifacts to the physical space—that participate in different forms of social capital, cultural or social; however, other dimensions were also included. We believe that the results

enrich this definition, incorporating other dimensions, and above all other relational properties among people, and between people and things. This also corresponds to our question on social transformations that could be involved in this resource economics and the associated social differentiation.

We consider that the variety of resources managed, along with the materialities of different classes in the archaeological record, might have responded to the emergence of new social fields in a more heterogeneous and diversified social organization, that did not exist as such before (i.e., Formative Period) (Laguens 2003, 2006a). They might be new social fields, as structured spaces of positions, linked to certain properties, which are amenable with the analysis, independent of the characteristics of those who occupied them (Bourdieu 1990; Gutiérrez 1995, 2003). These were the social fields influenced by the new forms of capital, with varying limits and effects on people. If the presence of these resources in the new configurations indicates the existence of other fields, then its genesis must be associated with struggles and transformations in the society, and not to external processes or pressures. We believe that analysis of the trajectory in time of the volume of resources and the capital structure of each field would help us to understand the social transformations, such as those that occurred between societies of the Formative Period and Aguada societies.

Our case study came out to be interesting to observe the heterogeneity in this particular social configuration and the differential distribution of the resources that characterized each aggregate. It is important to highlight this final characteristic, not only because of the fact that it coincides with the theoretical definitions of social complexity but also owing to the polythetic characteristic that acquires any definition about social inequality that we may deal with. Therefore, we cannot define differences among the people and groups of people as from one or two types of resources, as we could, for example, from the differences based on the access to economic resources or the possession of the space as a resource, since the resources types (or capitals) are many that coexist simultaneously and differently characterize each group for its properties, irrespective of its absence or the minimal quantity available. We considered the volume and resources structure as two important descriptive dimensions in the characterization of the social inequality.

We also considered that this had allowed a way of having theoretical approximation to groups or social classes with the definition of relative positions of the people or groups of people in that space. It also allowed conceptualization of the social inequality as a relational, relative, and multidimensional dimension and not as the accumulation of goods or rights over the goods, as considered in the occidental style.

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Poor Chiefs: Corporate Dimensions of Pre-Inca Society in the Southern Andes

Axel E. Nielsen

Most scholars agree on the fact that south Andean society experienced dramatic changes around the beginning of the second millennium CE, a phenomenon that marks the transition between the Middle Period (500–1000 CE) and the Late Intermediate Period (1000–1450 CE).[1] This agreement notwithstanding, it is still difficult to pinpoint the nature of these changes because the evidence available does not fit the social typologies commonly used by archeology to interpret the pre-Columbian history of the area. The Late Intermediate Period (LIP) is characterized by the formation of polities of unprecedented scale in all the regions where agriculture is feasible. These political organizations were able to mobilize and coordinate large labor forces to build and administer complex irrigation systems or to develop regional defensive strategies. Political integration, however, correlates with a relative decrease in the consumption of goods commonly associated with status and prestige, such as iconographically elaborate or finely crafted objects made in scarce, or non-local materials including precious metals. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in places like San Pedro de Atacama where some authors have observed a "cultural impoverishment" of sorts (Núñez 1991, p. 61; Tarragó 1989), and also visible to some extent in other regions like Quebrada de Humahuaca (Nielsen 1996). The situation is hard to understand from a Cultural Evolutionary perspective because while the settlement patterns indicate an increase in the scale of political integration, the tendencies in the consumption of wealth suggest a reduction in social differences.

In the following pages I argue that this apparent contradiction results from the inability of the chiefdom model— the main heuristic framework still used explicitly or implicitly—to expose the organizational logic of pre-Inca peoples in the Southern

[1] This transition is dated to sometime between AD 900 and 1250, depending on the region and the author. As to the periods themselves, they receive different names in Argentina (Middle and Regional Developments Period), Chile (Middle and Late Intermediate Period), and Bolivia (Middle Horizon and Late Intermediate Period).

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Andes (NW Argentina, N Chile, and SW Bolivia). More generally, I believe that Neo-Evolutionary typologies are inadequate theoretical tools for understanding the social processes that occurred during the pre-Columbian history of the area. I begin outlining some aspects of the Cultural Evolutionary program, putting emphasis on the chiefdom concept and its application to late pre-Hispanic societies of Northwest Argentina. Then, I summarize some of the organizational principles of Andean societies revealed by the ethnohistorical literature as a point of departure to imagine alternatives to the "rank society" or "chiefdom" models. The heuristic potential of these ideas is then illustrated through the discussion of archaeological examples from the LIP of Northwest Argentina and Southern Bolivia.

The Chiefdom Model and its Application to Northwest Argentina

Like any other research program, Cultural Evolutionism comprises a set of unyielding nuclear premises or *negative heuristic* (*sensu* Lakatos 1970) and a series of "protective" propositions and models—*positive heuristic*—that undergo changes and reformulations through confrontation with other programs and with empirical data. The notion that variability in the organization of human populations can be reduced to a limited number of types, which can be defined in terms of a series of functionally inter-dependent demographic, economic, and political traits, is at the core of the Cultural Evolutionary program. Concrete populations in different times and places go from one organization type to the next, following a similar evolutionary sequence. When adopted by archaeology, this premise justifies the use of ethnographically or ethnohistorically documented cases as analogies for reconstructing the organization of past peoples which are only known through material remains.

According to this program, substantive research should aim at (1) refining social typologies (e.g., recognizing previously unnoticed variants) and (2) identifying universal principles to account for the transition from one type to another, two goals that require a comparative strategy capable of identifying cross-cultural regularities. As a part of the positive heuristic of the program, these aspects have experienced considerable changes over time. The typologies originally proposed by Service (1962) and Fried (1967), for example, have been repeatedly modified, expanded, or refined to accommodate empirical diversity and typological "anomalies," adjusting accordingly the archaeological attributes considered diagnostic of each type. Something similar has happened to the explanation of change, which has shifted toward multi-lineal models that envision more than one path leading from one type to the next, even though there are different ideas regarding how many and which are these trajectories (Earle 1997; Hayden 2001). The chiefdom model—rank society, *señorío*, *jefatura* or "complex society" as a broad organizational type—is one of the most persistent and generalized components of Cultural Evolutionism among archaeologists interested in the study of social change. Like other aspects of the positive heuristic of the program, this concept has also experienced significant changes since its original

formulations as a "redistributive society" by Service (1962, p. 144; cf. Earle 1978). In its latest version, the concept refers to centralized political formations with institutionalized social inequalities which integrate populations of thousands or tens of thousands people (Carneiro 1981; Earle 1987, p. 279, p. 290). In order to finance the institutions and practices that sustain their centralized political power, chiefs—and the hierarchies they preside—must *control the production and/or distribution of strategic economic resources*, be they staples or wealth. This control, which is the base of the "political economy"—as opposed to the domestic or subsistence economy[2] (Johnson and Earle 1987, pp. 11–15), is the basis of the structural inequalities that characterize this type of society.

Why do chiefdoms emerge? The first answers to this question focused on the contributions that centralized leadership would have made to the well being of communities, i.e., coordinating defensive actions or long-distance trade, administering irrigation works or accumulating resources for redistribution in times of need. Like other forms of functionalism, these managerial theories lost popularity in the 1980s, when the question became: "In spite of the fact that their actions do not serve common interests, how do elites establish and maintain their control?" (Gilman 1981, p. 4). During the past three decades, a vast literature combining elements from Evolutionism and Marxism has discussed the different strategies that allowed ambitious factions or individuals—elites and *aggrandizers* (Hayden and Gargett 1990; Clark and Blake 1994)—to seize control of power and the conditions that may have favored their success (Haas 2001; Hayden 2001; Price and Feinman 1995). According to Earle, one of the most active advocates of the model, these strategies can be geared toward the control of the economy, of prestige goods, or of armed force, resources that support three basic forms of power: economic, ideological, and military (Earle 1997; following Mann 1986). Although the formation of chiefdoms requires the participation of all these forms of power, the ability of chiefs to secure the control of the economy is crucial:

> By controlling the production and distribution of staples and prestige goods, chiefs invest surplus so as to control military might and ideological right. To the degree that leaders control staple production that supports warriors and priests and control the specialized manufacture of their weapons and symbolic objects, military intimidation and religious sanctity belong to the rulers (Earle 1997, p. 207).

Earle (1997) illustrates this idea through a comparison of the Hawaiian chiefdoms, which reached the threshold of statehood based on the tight control that chiefs held on agricultural production (*staple-finance chiefdom*), with the unstable Bronze Age chiefdoms of Thy (Denmark), formed around the ideological power given by the control of production and exchange of prestige goods (*prestige-good chiefdom*). Both cases, in turn, differ significantly from the "institutional weakness" (Earle 1997, p. 94) of pre-Inca Wanka chiefdoms (Perú) which, given environmental constraints

[2] This use of the term is different from the more common use of the concept of "political economy" in the social sciences (Ortner 1984; Cobb 1992).

on economic control and the little "ideological elaboration" they achieved (Earle 1997, p. 209), were based only on the ephemeral control of force by their military leaders or *cinchecona*.

Cultural Evolutionism and its typologies entered the archaeology of Northwest Argentina in the 1970s (e.g., González and Pérez 1972; Núñez Regueiro 1974; Cigliano and Raffino 1977), once the bases of regional chronological sequences had been established. By demonstrating the significant temporal depth of the pre-Hispanic history of the area, González (1963) had shown the inadequacy of the hitherto standard practice of "fleshing out" the past by making extensive to the "prehistoric cultures" of each region the descriptions of indigenous groups given in early Colonial sources (e.g., Canals Frau 1953). The Evolutionist program was not only consistent with the Ecological-Marxist materialism embraced by that generation (Núñez Regueiro 1974), but also offered a method for reconstructing past societies that resorted to the archaeological evidence itself, at least to associate certain cultures or periods with ethnographically inspired social types.

The schemes band-tribe-chiefdom (Service 1962) and egalitarian vs. ranked society (Fried 1967) have been the main heuristic frameworks structuring research and reflection about pre-Columbian social change in the area ever since. Even today these concepts implicitly inspire the way social processes are imagined and generate the questions and hypotheses that drive field research; they support countless "tentative interpretations," provisionally fill the main gaps in our knowledge of the past, and provide the categories and the rhetoric used for thinking and discussing about these topics (e.g., Pérez 2000; Raffino 2007; Sempé 1999; Tarragó 2000).

From the beginning, the societies of the LIP (1000–1450 CE) in NW Argentina and in the Southern Andes in general, were interpreted as chiefdoms.[3] The main archaeological grounds for this interpretation were and continue to be the following: (1) the existence of hierarchical relationships among settlements—inferred mainly on the basis of size differences—which suggest processes of inter-community integration involving populations of considerable size (in the order of thousands) and (2) variations in mortuary treatment, particularly in the type and number of goods, which are interpreted as straightforward indicators of the social status of the deceased. In addition to these evidences, ethnohistorical sources refer to the existence of *kurakas* with authority over several communities or entire regions, like the Calchaquí Valley or Quebrada de Humahuaca. Once established on the basis of these indicators that the communities of the period were chiefdoms other characteristics are assumed without further discussion or specific archaeological support, e.g., that they were politically centralized, that the chief and his close relatives had a firm control of the economy (of prestige-good production and trade and/or of intensive agriculture), that the main settlements were organized according to "urban" models, with elite quarters and areas of craft production, etc.

[3] In the 1990s the chiefdom concept was also applied to the Formative and Middle Period societies of the first millennium CE in the Valliserrana region (Tartusi and Núez 1993; González 1998; Tarragó 1999).

Andean Social Formations in the Sixteenth Century

Since its initial formulations, the chiefdom model was mainly based on ethnohistorical information from northern South America and Polynesia, ignoring the great variability of social forms present in the ethnography and history of Asia and Africa (White 1995, p. 102; McIntosh 1999; Yoffee 1993, 2005). As noted by McIntosh (1999, p. 2), many organizational forms recorded in Africa are hard to fit into Neoevolutionist typologies, particularly segmentary political structures that integrated vast populations through complex, but relatively decentralized institutions. Murra himself stressed the similarities that existed between some of these African social formations and those described by colonial documents for the Andes (Murra 1978, p. 13).

The conquistadors interpreted the leadership structures they found in the Andes by analogy with the experience of Middle Age Europe, as descending chains of authority delegated by a monarch, assimilating in this way the bewildering diversity of political institutions they found in this and other areas of the New World to the familiar concepts that structured social hierarchies in Europe at the time. This is why ethnic leaders or *kurakas* were depicted in ways that resembled European feudal lords, while Andean polities were called "chiefdoms" (*señoríos*; see Pease 1992, p. 36). The ethnohistorical literature, however, indicates that these societies showed a strong corporate orientation and had multiple institutional mechanisms that constrained the use of political power and prevented the accumulation of economic resources in the hands of particular individuals or lineages. Indeed, these social formations show several attributes of what has been called "corporate mode of political action" (Blanton et al. 1996; Feinman 2000) or "complex communalism" (McGuire and Saitta 1997), characterized by formalized "egalitarian behaviors" (sensu Blanton 1998, p. 152) which tended to prevent the development of social closure.

The organization of Andean "ethnic chiefdoms" has been analyzed in detail by ethnohistorians and ethnographers (i.e., Bouysse-Cassagne 1975; Murra 1975; Espinoza 1981; Harris 2000; Platt 1987; Platt et al. 2006; Rasnake 1989; Izko 1992; Pease 1992; Martínez 1998) and has been summarized in the archaeological literature (e.g., Albarracín 1997; Isbell 1997; Nielsen 2006), so it does not need to be described in detail here. My goal is just to recount some basic structural principles of these formations in order to highlight the conditions they established for the appropriation of various "capitals" (Bourdieu 1986) and for the negotiation of power. Certainly, Andean populations show significant variation in their organization and scale. Indeed, the following synthesis resorts to observations and interpretations of authors who work on different groups described by Europeans during the time when the Andean highlands were conquered, from the Chupaychu in central Peru to the Qaraqara in the valleys of Potosí, Bolivia. My goal is not to describe any particular society, but to abstract from these observations a general model that can serve as a frame of reference to formulate hypothesis and to analyze specific archaeological data.

The basic unit of Andean segmentary formations was the *ayllu*, a group of people who conceived of themselves as relatives, as descendants of a common ancestor (historical or mythical), and administered corporatively strategic resources associated to the land, such as farmland, water, and pastures. At a minimum level these units

comprised dozens or hundreds of families, often residing in different villages or communities. Several of these segments (minor *ayllus*) were inclusively associated in a variable number of increasingly encompassing levels of organization (major *ayllus*, moieties, ethnic groups, confederations). The resulting coalitions were capable of integrating populations in the order of thousands or tens of thousands, occasionally including more than one ethnic group, as it happened with the Qaraqara-Charka or the Killaka-Asanaki, which included also Uru groups (Platt et al. 2006). The constitutive segments or *parcialidades*, however, did not lose their identity or relative political autonomy.

As it is commonly the case among segmentary organizations (Kuper 1982), the *ayllus* and their political relationships were structured on the basis of two logics that were closely intertwined in experience and practice; one of them was *territorial*, the other one involved *kinship*. The former was not only based on the common experience of living in a place that had to be managed and defended (Izko 1992), but also on the need to access different productive zones which, in the Andes like in other mountain regions of the world, are distributed over considerable distances (Murra 1975; Salomon 1985). Thus, political formations in the Andes tended to control territories (continuous or discontinuous) that comprised different elevation zones and areas of resource concentration. Within these "ethnic territories," sometimes the areas belonging to different segments or *parcialidades* were spatially woven and dispersed accross different eco-zones. This territorial pattern secured for the minimum organizational units—minor *ayllus* or even households—direct access to a wide variety of resources, including land suitable for cultivating both tempered and frost-resistant crops (maize, tubers, and quinoa), as well as grazing areas (Murra 1975; Harris 2000; Platt et al. 2006; Pease 1992).

At every level of the segmentary hierarchy political power was exerted by authorities (*jilaqatas* for minor *ayllus*, *mallkus* for major *ayllus* or moieties, *qhapac mallkus* for ethnic groups or federations), usually assisted by a "second person" whose faculties could range from shared government to replacement or succession (Platt 1987, p. 73). In certain contexts, these male authorities had to serve together with their wives or *t'allas* (Rasnake 1989). Even when at the lower levels some of these positions may have been periodically rotated and, therefore, be filled by different families taking turns, the middle and high tiers of the segmentary hierarchy were occupied by members of one or a few lineages ("main houses" or *casas principales*) within each *ayllu*, and only certain *ayllus* provided the *mallkus* that ruled the moieties or the ethnic group as a whole (*qhapac mallku*).

The privileges enjoyed by certain lineages and *ayllus* were justified by the second structuring principle of Andean segmentary formations, kinship. This logic was based on shared beliefs about common origins and about a hierarchy of ancestors who were conceived as ultimate owners of the land and sources of political authority. Each *ayllu* enjoyed the resources and rank that corresponded to their founding ancestor. The reproduction of this ideology was tied to practices in which certain natural features (mountains, rocks, caves) or objects—authority emblems, the body of the ancestor, or other artifacts that represented him/her, such as sepulchers, monoliths, images, or textiles (Duviols 1979; Isbell 1997; Kaulicke 2001)—acquired special significance as

referents of ancestors and of the rights of their descendants. Ceremonies of investiture placed authorities in this cosmological order, transforming the persons who were appointed into *wak'as* or deities (Martínez 1995).

This ideology resulted in hierarchies of groups rather than individuals. In practice, the corporate character of the power enjoyed by principal lineages was sustained through institutional arrangements that obliged those who occupied political offices to negotiate regularly with the other members of the group (Platt 1987; Pease 1992). Firstly, the selection of *kurakas* or *mallkus* did not result from the blind application of a norm, like primogeniture, but was negotiated among influential members of the group, including elders and other authorities. Secondly, the decisions and the mobilization of collective labor and surplus required the consensus of other authorities situated above and below in the segmentary hierarchy, or at a similar level, i.e., second persons, leaders of other moieties and *ayllus*.

In addition to these mechanisms that constrained the accumulation of power by certain individuals in the lineages, there were others that balanced the relationship between *kurakas* and the members of the community, subordinating the legitimacy of political power to the fulfillment of certain obligations (Pease 1992, pp. 38–40). Ethnic leaders served as mediators for populations of different sizes according to their rank. When mediating between persons and groups, this role involved the administration of justice, the management and periodic re-allocation of collective resources (land, water, pastures), and the coordination of labor for public works. As intermediaries between the community and the deities, *kurakas* were responsible for the worship of *wak'as* and the organization of various rituals and communal celebrations. Finally, they had to intercede on behalf of the community with other political powers, including eventually the Inkas and the Spanish colonial administration.

The ideal of equilibrium between the authority and the community, inspired by the reciprocity among kin, translated into the obligation of *kurakas* of redistributing economic surplus among community members and resulted in generosity being considered a fundamental quality of ethnic leaders. Every household had to contribute to the authority a certain amount of labor in tasks such as farming, herding, transporting products, or crafting goods. *Kurakas*, on the other hand, had to provide the necessary infrastructure, raw materials, or supplies, and were expected to feed the workers during their shift (*mit'a*) and to provide them with especially valued goods, such as coca. In order to fulfill these obligations they had special estates where they could produce valuable crops, such as maize, peppers, or coca, and in some cases, owned particularly large herds. These resources also allowed ethnic authorities to afford their ceremonial duties (offerings and feasts) and the reciprocity obligations inherent to the relationship with other political leaders (hospitality, gift giving, etc.).

These practices reveal a structure or "social space" (Bourdieu 1985) organized according to a corporate logic that differs significantly from the exclusionary one proposed by the chiefdom model (see Blanton et al. 1996). These corporate principles can be summarized as follows:

1. The lower-order social units in segmentary formations (parcialidades or ayllus) maintained collective control over key economic resources and retained the right

of appointing and controlling some of their authorities. Power, therefore, was not built "from the top down," or "from the center outward," but even in the highest levels of the hierarcy it required some degree of consensus from the bases.
2. The main inequalities were built around the political field, where institutionalized hierarchies did exist. These differences, however, did not favor individuals but collectives: ethnic groups, "upper" moieties, qollana ayllus, principal lineages, etc. Individuals exerted political power on behalf of collectives and were involved in regular negotiations with the other members of the group.
3. Political hierarchies resulted in economic advantages, since they justified forms of appropriation of resources (land, herds, or labor) that were not accessible to other lineages or to other members of the community. Economic accumulation, however, was constrained by the redistributive obligations associated with positions of authority and by the decentralized character of the productive structure.
4. The power of *kurakas* and their economic privileges did not depend on their capacity to coerce community members through the use of force or to deprive them of important resources for their material or cultural reproduction. It was rather based on the collective adherence to a cosmological order embodied in certain emblems, rites, and representations focused on ancestors.
5. The main forms of accumulation involved social and symbolic capital. The real wealth of *kurakas* did not lie in the goods they owned, but in the extent of the redistributive network they articulated (Pease 1992, pp. 121–126); i.e., in the number of households owing them labor tribute, on the kinds of services involved, and on the loyalties and prestige acquired through the practice of commensal politics (Dietler 2000).
6. The ideological importance of the equilibrium between authority and community, individual and lineage, hierarchy and equality (Platt 1987, p. 98), required a systematic concealment of social inequalities as a necessary condition for their reproduction. This stands in contrast with the expectations of ostentation and conspicuous consumption associated with the concept of "prestige goods economy."

An Archaeological Example: South Andean Plazas in the Fourteenth Century

The organization of pre-Columbian peoples cannot be reconstructed through wholesale analogies with the information offered by colonial written sources, as proposed long time ago by the "direct historical approach." This knowledge can only be achieved stepwise, through archaeological inference and through the assessment of multiple hypotheses or interpretations. Here is where the heuristic value of Andean ethnography and ethnohistory lies, since the hypotheses and interpretive frames they propose are probably more relevant to the material record we study than those extracted from the European Middle Ages, the chiefdoms of Polynesia, or the academics' commonsense.

A systematic analysis of the potential archaeological referents of the practices just summarized exceeds the possibilities of this chapter. My goal is just to argue through a few examples that certain aspects of the archaeological record of the Late Intermediate Period (1000–1450 CE, from now on LIP) in the Southern Andes fit better the expectations of the ethnohistorical model that those proposed by the Neo-evolutionist literature.

The Area and the Period

The Southern Andes are more arid and show less overall productivity than the Central Andes (Peru and NW Bolivia). These characteristics have resulted in smaller and unevenly distributed populations, with relatively fertile and densely populated patches separated by large unproductive and scarcely inhabited areas (deserts, mountain heights). In order of decreasing productivity, the more hospitable regions (where agriculture is feasible) are of three kinds (Fig. 1): (a) valleys on the eastern Andean flanks, like Quebrada de Humahuaca or Calchaquí Valley; (b) Altiplano basins, such as North Lípez and Miraflores-Guayatayoc; and (c) valles and oases on the western flanks, like the Upper Loa and the Atacama Oases.

Starting at the beginning of the second millennium, population aggregation is noticeable in all these regions. This process speeds up during the thirteenth century, and seems to peak in the fourteenth century with the formation of densely occupied conglomerates, usually located in places which are difficult to access and enjoy very good visibility, strategic conditions that have been occasionally reinforced through the construction of defensive architecture. Substantial size differences among sites and the presence of clearly defined plazas in some of them suggest the existence of settlement hierarchies, in which some villages would have served as centers of polities that integrated several smaller communities. Demographic concentration and political integration within regions were accompanied by significant economic changes, such as agricultural intensification with emphasis on irrigation, an emphasis on the exploitation of secondary products of herds (fiber and transport), and a relative increase in interregional traffic.

Archaeological research conducted in the public spaces or "plazas" of LIP sites located near the modern frontier between Bolivia and Argentina offers a possibility of exploring the nature of the changes that took place during this period. I will focus on two sites that I have studied extensively, Los Amarillos (Quebrada de Humahuaca, Argentina) and Laqaya (North Lípez, Bolivia). These settlements, intensively occupied during the 13th and 14th centuries, represent the highest tier of the settlement hierarchies that developed in these two regions after 1200 CE, an inference that is not only based on their size (10 has Los Amarillos, 7 has Laqaya), but also on the complexity of their structure, with formally and functionally differentiated sectors, and plazas of different sizes. I expected, then, that their archaeological study would contribute to understand the processes of integration that characterize this period of South Andean history.

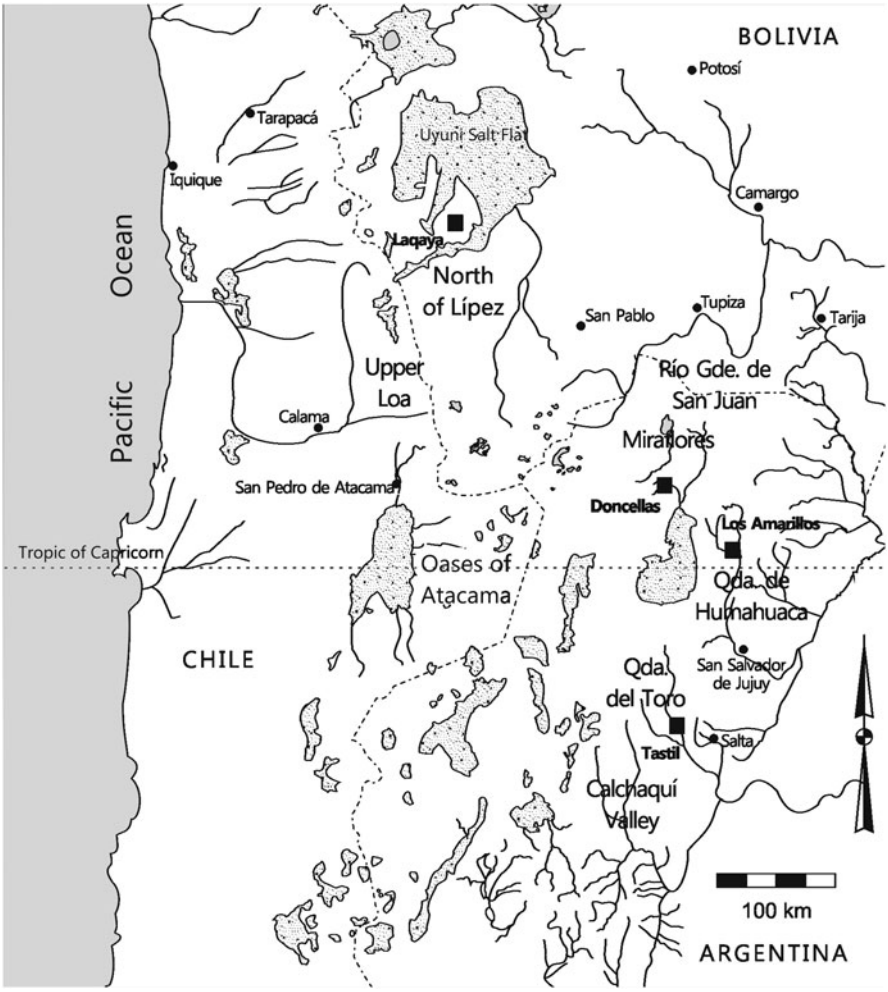

Fig. 1 The Southern Andes and some regions and sites mentioned in the text

The research design puts emphasis on the investigation of public spaces under the premise that the activities conducted there would have a direct relationship with the modes of reproduction of political power. Building on the ethnohistorical model, I had two expectations regarding the use of public areas: (a) that they would focus on the ancestors as referents of the corporate cosmological order rather than in the person of ethnic leaders and (b) that they would involve the communal consumption of exceptional food and drink as strategies of political commensalism (*sensu* Dietler 1987) associated to the reproduction of that order.

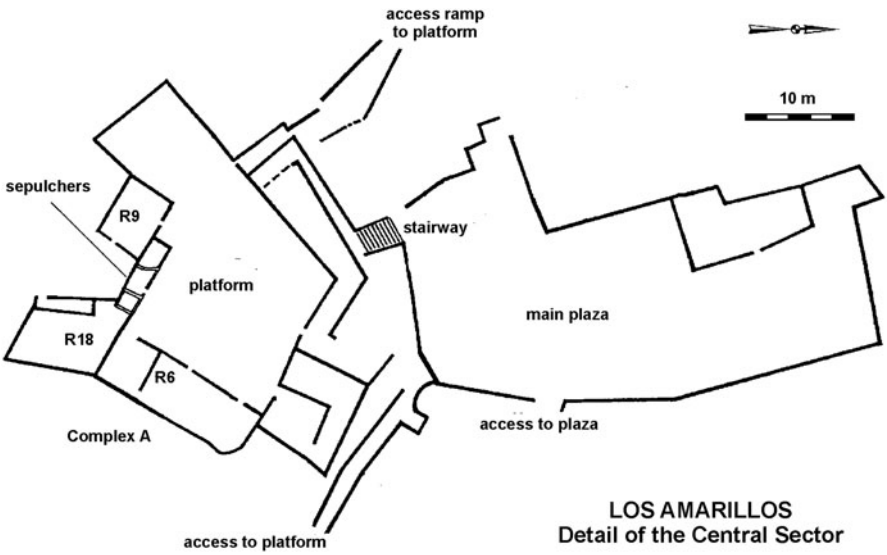

Fig. 2 Central sector of Los Amarillos

Los Amarillos

The main excavations were conducted in Complex A, an artificial platform built on the side of a sandstone outcrop overlooking the main plaza of the Central Sector of the site (Fig. 2). The leveled surface of the platform occupies an area of 550 m^2 where three construction sectors were identified. The farthest removed from the plaza has several structures, three of which were excavated. Room 9 (R9) had a well prepared floor but almost no refuse or features, except for a rectangular platform made of solid adobe in the northeast corner. The roof of the room was burnt and fallen on the clean floor. By contrast, Room 18 had abundant de facto refuse, including significant quantities of maize, textile fragments, and several whole vessels that were smashed *in situ* by the burned roof fall. The ceramic assemblage included several large serving dishes like the one illustrated in Fig. 3g. Room 6 was not roofed and had four hearths. The floor was covered with trash, mainly ceramic fragments and camelid bones in a matrix of charcoal and ashes.

Toward the center of the platform, abutting the northern wall of Rooms 9 and 18, there were three exceptional sepulchers erected above the level of the platform. They had rectangular plans and stood out visually because they were built with light colored adobe bricks. This kind of tomb and the construction technique used have not been recorded elsewhere in the site or in the region. They contained the remains of three adults (two males, one female) deposited with a rich assemblage that included—among other elements—implements for snuffing hallucinogenic substances (tablets, tubes, spoons), small ceramic vessels, arrows, a bone trumpet, weaving tools, and textiles, apparently the remains of several garments decorated with over 7,000 beads

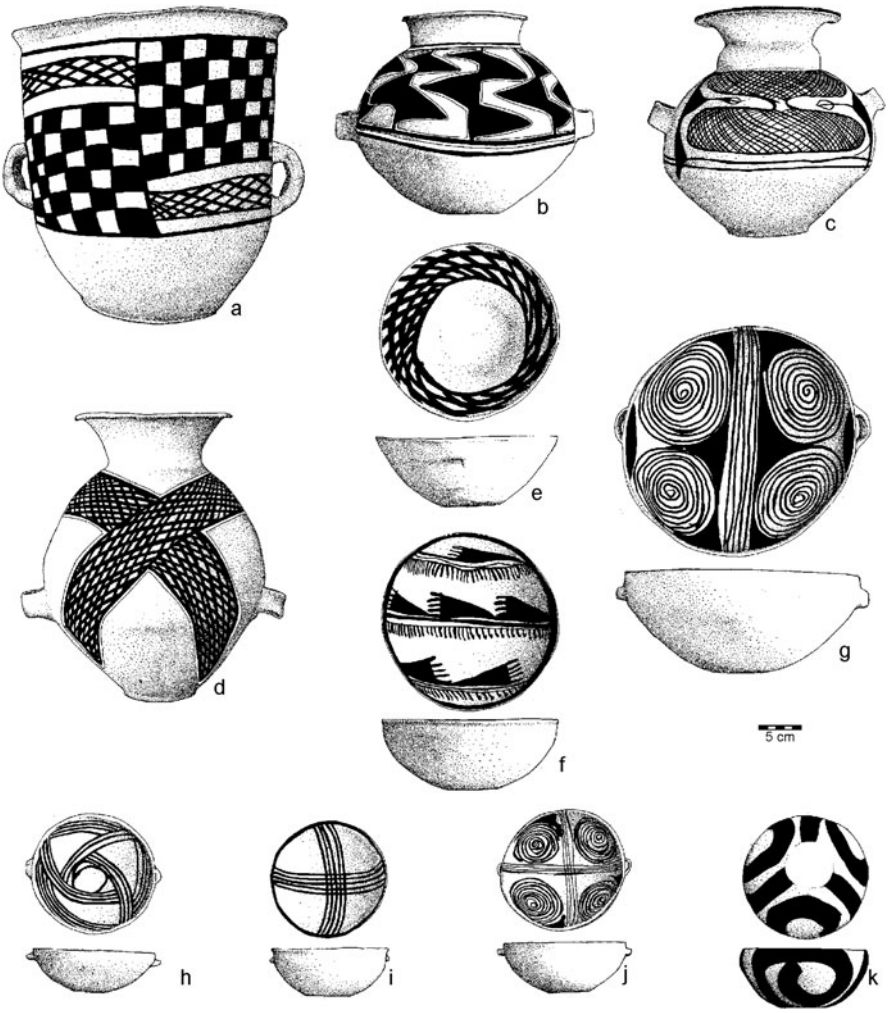

Fig. 3 Examples of painted vessels of the Late Intermediate Period, Late Phase (1250–1450 CE), in Quebrada de Humahuaca

(white shell and green malachite) and two rectangular gold plaques. It was not possible to establish the disposition and specific associations of these bodies and artifacts because the context had been violently destroyed. The adobe walls of the sepulchers had been knocked down and the content had been taken out, broken, burned, and redeposited, as indicated by several refitting fragments of the bodies and artifacts found in different tombs. The entire context was buried by a midden accumulated during the Late Horizon, which included significant quantities of Inca ceramics (Nielsen 2006).

Finally, north of the sepulchers the platform was free of construction, as a wide stage (325 m^2) overlooking (or exposed to) the plaza located to the north. The only features found in this sector were a large (1 × 2 m) fire pit filled with ashes, a secondary burial with parts of torso and upper limbs of two adults and in the center of the "stage," a square stone lined pit. Among the remains found in this open area, there were numerous corn kernels and a large wooden spoon, similar to those used ethnographically for stirring maize beer or *chicha*.

To the north of Complex A, four to six meters below, there is a large enclosure surrounded by rooms of unknown function. This is one of the largest and most centrally located plazas at the site. The test excavations conducted there revealed only a compact occupation surface free of residues. In spite of their proximity and inter-visibility, this plaza and Complex A have separate access ways and show no direct communication. The north and west flanks of the platform have been terraced and have at least one stairway that leads to the top (Fig. 2). The steps are so small, however, that this feature, like the terraces next to it, seem to have served mainly as an architectural device to enhance visually the relevance of the platform and of the actions staged on it from the perspective of the people occupying the plaza below (Nielsen 1995). Five radiocarbon dates situate the construction of this public area after 1220 CE and its use between 1280 and 1480 CE (Cal. 2σ). The burning and destruction of the sepulchers and associated structures took place around the time of the Inka conquest of the region.

Laqaya

This settlement has three well-defined sectors (Fig. 4) that were simultaneously occupied during the late phase of the LIP (1250–1450 CE). Alto Laqaya is a fortress built on a high butte; it is defended by a cliff on the eastern side and by a double wall on the western flank. Within the protected area there are almost one hundred houses which seem to have been occupied only temporarily or episodically, probably by those living most of the time in the lower, vulnerable village (Bajo Laqaya). The second sector comprises ca. 300 stone towers, circular or rectangular in plan, formally comparable to *chullpas*. Discussing the function and meaning of these buildings is beyond the scope of this article, but it should be emphasized that I use this term to refer to an *architectural form* that I believe was understood in the past as an embodiment of ancestral agency (Nielsen 2008; cf. Aldunate and Castro 1981; Isbell 1997). As such, *chullpas* served as sepulchers, silos, altars, and territorial markers among other functions. In the case of Laqaya, the absence of human bones and the number of structures suggests that they were used mainly for storage. The public space of interest for the present discussion is located toward the center of the third sector of the site, Bajo Laqaya, a village with about 200 houses.

The plaza of Bajo Laqaya is an area free of construction (280 m^2) that stands out against the dense web of domestic architecture. On the eastern side of the plaza there are three *chullpa* towers with rectangular plans, and on the opposite side, three

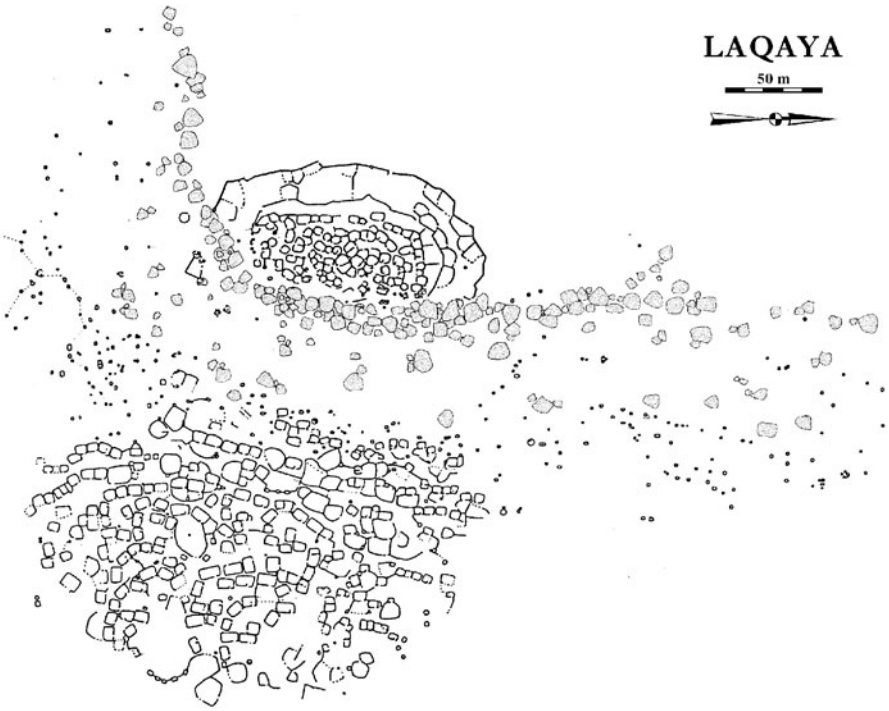

Fig. 4 Laqaya (North Lípez, Bolivia)

rectangular buildings, each one measuring approximately 5×9 m. These rooms probably had gabled roofs, like most structures at the site, which in some cases still have standing walls. The excavation of one of these buildings on the western side of the plaza exposed two posts for roof support and a large hearth protected by an air deflector next to the doorway. Embedded in the sandy, permeable floor was a lot of refuse, including great quantities of camelid bone and painted serving bowls of the characteristic regional style of this period, known as Mallku. The shape of this building and the placement of the hearth replicates in a larger scale the internal configuration of the houses at this and other contemporaneous settlements in the region (Nielsen 2001).

One of the *chullpas* facing the plaza was completely excavated and the other two were tested. All of them had stone pavements and had been used for storage, as indicated by abundant grains of quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa*) and textile remains, probably fragments of the bags in which the grains were kept. Roofing materials found inside demonstrate that the *chullpas* had been burned and later filled with trash. In the center of the plaza there is a square stone lined pit similar to the one found in the middle of Complex A of Los Amarillos. In the case of Laqaya, the feature is still open and used by the local communities who occasionally gather at the site during certain ceremonies and pour offerings of *chicha* and blood of sacrificed animals in this pit. The southern side of the plaza is defined by a low wall which

Fig. 5 Hypothetical reconstruction of the central plaza of Bajo Lakaya (drawing by Mónica I. Nielsen)

probably served as a bench. There are no restrictions of access among the various components of this public space, or between it and the rest of the settlement (Fig. 5).

Eleven radiocarbon dates situate the construction of the plaza and surrounding structures—as well as Alto Laqaya—after 1280 CE and the destruction of the *chullpas* sometime between 1400 and 1620 CE (Cal. 2σ). Both the fortress of Alto Laqaya and the plaza area seem to have been abandoned after the Inka conquest, a period when Santiago Chuquilla (4 km to the northeast) became the main population center. Only a small sector toward the north of Bajo Laqaya continued to be occupied during Inka times and for some time during the Colonial Period.

Discussion

The comparison of these two public spaces occupied mainly during the fourteenth century reveals some interesting analogies. Firstly, both are structured around monumental—i.e., highly visible and durable—representations of ancestors. In Los

Amarillos, these were above-ground sepulchers which allowed regular access to the bodies (*malkis*) and their belongings (Isbell 1997). The *chullpa* towers flanking Laqaya's main plaza may have had similar meanings. As argued elsewhere (Nielsen 2008) there are good reasons to understand these structures as embodiments of the ancestors themselves, regardless of the different functions they may have been used for. Indeed, considering the special location of these three structures, their exceptional size, and the existence of hundreds of similar storage structures on the western edge of the village, it seems reasonable to think that the quinoa inside these *chullpas* was related to the public ceremonies that took place in the plaza, rather than being another instance of ordinary storage. If these interpretations are correct, the central position occupied by these monuments in the main plazas of villages that seem to be at the top of regional settlement hierarchies—therefore at the center of the cultural landscapes of Humahuaca and Lipez—would support the ethnohistorical hypothesis regarding the importance of ancestor worship in the reproduction of the political formations of the pre-Inca period.

There are references in the South Andean literature to contemporaneous contexts in other regions that may be similar to the ones just described (Fig. 1). In the central plaza of Tastil (Quebrada del Toro region), for example, Cigliano (1973) found a sepulcher abutting a large boulder that contained the bodies of two adults and a juvenile buried with an exceptional assemblage of over one hundred artifacts. The bodies were headless, a relatively common phenomenon at this settlement which has been associated with ancestor veneration (Vivante 1973). Unlike the other cases studied at the site, however, these three bodies were wrapped with textiles, as reported by ethnohistoric sources that describe the periodic extraction of funerary bundles from their sepulchers to be exhibited and paraded, or to join the living community in public feasts (e.g., Arriaga 1968 [1621]; Guamán Poma 1980 [1615]; Taylor 1999 [1598]).

In Doncellas (Puna region) there is an open plaza that includes an artificial platform or terrace cut on the natural hillside. On this structure, which can be reached from the plaza through a stairway—a setting that resembles Complex A of Los Amarillos—there were a series of cut stone monoliths (Alfaro de Lanzone 1988, pp. 51–53). Ethnohistorical sources refer to these monuments as *wankas*, lithic representations (or embodiments) of ancestors (Duviols 1979). *Wankas* were relatively frequent at this time in both the Puna and the Río Grande de San Juan regions, where they were found in courtyards or sometimes used as pillars for roof support in houses. Exceptionally, they appear in burials or in association with rock art (Krapovickas and Aleksandrowicz 1986, p. 115).

These contexts, which are probably just a few examples among many to be identified through model-oriented observation, suggest that under different monumental embodiments (above-ground sepulchers, *chullpas*, *wankas*, bundles) ancestors occupied a high position in the socio-spatial hierarchies constituted during the 13th and 14th centuries in the Southern Andes. If ancestors are understood as mythical referents of the rights of lineages and *ayllus* over the usufruct of key resources and social positions, the presence of multiple ancestors in the public spaces of the main villages of the period may be interpreted as a recognition—in the context of

communal ceremonies—of the identity and relative power that these minimal social units maintained within the regional segmentary structures. From this point of view, the presence of *three* monuments of this kind in the two plazas investigated is very suggestive. It recalls the tripartite structure of some Andean political formations documented in the sixteenth century, which were conceived as the heterarchical union of three segments or *ayllus* that some sources (e.g., Ulloa 1885 [1585]) classify in the hierarchically arranged ethno-categories of *qollana*, *payan,* and *cayao*.

The content of the adobe sepulchers of Los Amarillos, which has similarities with the rich offerings of the burial found in the central plaza of Tastil, leads to question the meaning and practices associated with some objects commonly construed as "prestige goods," e.g., snuffing paraphernalia, metal "ornaments," rich garments, or semi-precious stones. These objects, mostly found in mortuary contexts, are usually taken as indicators of the rank of the associated individuals, while their differential distribution is interpreted as an expression of the hierarchical structure of chiefdoms (e.g., Cigliano 1973). The contexts described in this chapter, however, relate these artifacts with a complex of corporate symbols rather than with the personal ostentation of individual leaders or with the establishment of social closure through restrictions of access to coveted luxuries. On the other hand, it is clear that at least some of these assemblages formed through practices that involved different people and situations with the addition, replacement, and extractions of items, rather than one event (e.g., a funeral or an offering) denoting the identity of the deceased individuals in any direct way.

Moreover, if we take into consideration some written sources, it seems that some of these goods had only a transitory relationship with particular individuals (e.g., those buried with them); instead, some objects were revered as emblems of authority transmitted across generations. The textiles decorated with gold plaques or shell and malachite beads—like those worn by the ancestors in the sepulchers of Complex A of Los Amarillos—may be a case in point. Historical documents about the highland "kingdom" of Killaka-Asanake recount that when the Inca incorporated that multiethnic federation, he paid respect to its main leader or *qhapac mallku*—named Colque Guarache—giving him shirts that were decorated with gold, silver, and *mullu* (shell or copper beads (Espinoza 1981, p. 197)). This powerful ruler, however, could wear these valuable emblems only once in his lifetime, because according to custom, they had to be preserved in perfect condition to be passed on to his successors for generations on end (Espinoza 1981, p. 203).

In practice, the manipulation of these objects may have been reserved to individuals of high rank, such as *kurakas* or those responsible for communal ritual. It is also likely that the consumption of hallucinogenic substances was restricted to a few persons. The appropriation of these items, however, would have taken place on behalf of the collective and constrained by the conditions and negotiations that supported the legitimacy of the corporate authority, maintaining in this way its communal character (Saitta 1994). Colque Guarache could only have—and eventually wear—those wealthy garnments because they had been given to him by the Inca, the ultimate source of legitimacy at the time:

> Had it not been by this act, it was impossible that any *kuraka* or *mallku* could own or wear them [such shirts]. And if during the time of the Incas a lord obtained them by his own and individual efforts, the other *mallkus* did not allow him to wear them or even to keep them in his possession (Espinoza 1981, pp. 203–204).

In sum, the power did not stem from the possession of these objects as wealth, but from the practices that reproduced the belief of the community in the cosmology in which the hierarchies represented by the emblems were inscribed. According to the ethnohistorical sources, these practices did not involve necessarily esoteric knowledge or exclusion, but public celebrations open to the community capable of reinforcing through the enhanced experience of the feast, the sense of belonging to a collective. The material culture "impoverishment" noted at the beginning of this paper could reflect and reproduce the corporate orientation of power during this period. This hypothesis points to my second expectation, regarding strategies of political commensalism. The refuse recorded in the main plazas of Los Amarillos and Laqaya indicate that the preparation and consumption of food (meat and maize) and alcoholic beverages (*chicha*) were among the practices conducted in public spaces. The large structure next to the plaza of Laqaya seems to have been used for these activities—among other possible ones—taking into account the large hearth next to the doorway and the quantity of camelid bone and decorated serving bowls associated with the floor. If the three *chullpas* flanking the plaza were a public referent of a division of the community—e.g., conceived as the union of three descent groups—the presence of three rooms like the one excavated on the opposite side could indicate that the consumption or supply of food, drink, and offerings during these celebrations were organized on the basis of a similar tripartite structure.

The importance of feasting is revealed by the function and distribution of the ceramic vessels that show the most elaborate decorated styles of this period. The distinctive pottery style of Quebrada de Humahuaca, for example, characterized by black and white designs on red slipped surfaces (Fig. 3), is clearly associated with containers used for the preparation, distribution, and communal consumption of food and *chicha*. The large, open containers with chessboard designs (Fig. 3a) are very similar in shape to the vessels ethnographically known as *virques*, used today in particular steps of the process of brewing maize beer, while the large bowls (Figs. 3e and (3f) and serving bowls with handles (Fig. 3g), which are always painted with similar designs, suggest that food may have been displayed—perhaps for a large audience—before its consumption, a practice that has clear analogues in Andean ethnography. It should be noted that some of these vessel types (e.g., virques, large bowls, and serving bowls) are not present in earlier ceramic assemblages of the region. Moreover, during the early phase of the Late Intermediate Period (1000–1250 CE), for example, painted designs appear mostly on small bowls, beakers, and small jars, suggesting important changes, not only in the patterns of food consumption, but also in the practices and communication contexts in which painted pottery was used.

The comparison between the public areas of Los Amarillos and Laqaya also reveal significant differences between regions in the organization of these spaces and, probably, in the structures reproduced by political ritual. Los Amarillos' central sector,

for example, is hierarchically arranged, with restrictions of access and visual asymmetries which afford different forms of participation for people situated in different places. The access to the above-ground sepulchers and its content, in particular, was clearly reserved for the few individuals who entered Complex A, while most people could only observe these actions (or some of them) from the plaza (Nielsen 1995). Laqaya's plaza, on the other hand, is a more open and accessible space, a design that would favor a more fluid and symmetrical interaction among participants, and between humans and non-human agents (e.g., ancestors). These contrasts remind us that, beyond the existence of widely shared organizational principles, there were significant differences among regions in the distribution of power and in the political formations of this period. As Blanton (1998, p. 152) points out, corporate institutions and other mechanisms that constrain individual accumulation do not make social formations necessarily egalitarian. They only define a common framework of knowledge and value in which people define goals, evaluate conditions, chose between alternative strategies, and negotiate the necessary resources to carry out their life projects (Ortner 1984). Understanding these differences among regions and the history that brought them about are pending tasks in our research agenda.

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Against the Domain of Master Narratives: Archaeology and Antarctic History

Maria Ximena Senatore and Andrés Zarankin

Introduction

A typology is a scheme for classifying and ordering the world. As such, it implies a form of knowledge by which any given reality is categorized and represented. However, typological schemes do not limit themselves to classifying and ordering just physical objects. People, stories, events, and processes can all be ordered and classified according to typological schemes that correspond to specific logics, explicit or otherwise. Our initial research aims to understand how the history of Antarctica is structured in the official and dominant discourses. We begin with the idea that the "typical cultural strategy of dominant actors and institutions is not to establish uniformity, but it seeks to organize all difference" (Sewell 1999, p. 56). We then center our attention on the organization of these differences and use frameworks of interpretation that allow us to analyze the production and allocation of the classifications and exclusions that results in the creation of the master narratives of Antarctica.

In archaeology, typologies are generally used to classify and order collections of objects according to perceived similarities and differences. The use of typological classifications as an analytical tool has been widely utilized within archaeological practices. However, the production per se of some typologies was undertaken, without the explicit aim of problem solving. Our concerns regarding the indiscriminate use of typologies within historical archaeology of the 1990s were expressed in a short paper entitled *"Un clavo es un clavo." Limitaciones de los enfoques esencialistas en arqueologia* (Senatore and Zarankin 1996). This publication was written in a context of debate within Argentinian historical archaeology, where a significant portion of academic production was oriented to presenting object classifications. In

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it we also analyzed the implications of assuming that true or real categories can be discovered, in that such assumptions present a universal nature for the classifications, conditioning, and circumscribing the interpretation of material culture. At the time, we thought it was important to challenge the thinking underlying typological classifications, proposing analytical alternatives, according to specific problems and contexts.

In this case, we focus on the relationship between typological thought and the construction of official histories or master narratives (Johnson 1999). We understand that classifications and exclusions structure a way of looking at the past which is accepted as true, rarely questioned and assumed as representative of a whole. In this work we discuss the role of narratives and of archaeological materials in the construction of the master narratives about Antarctica. At the same time, we propose to challenge forms of typological thought that obscures plurality and presents a homogeneous past. Our perspective proposes, within archaeology, to make explicit the artificial nature of categorizations and established orderings, generating new analytical proposals and forms of knowledge. We maintain that, through the analysis of material culture, it is possible to question and to reconstruct the official history, offering alternative pasts and histories (Funari 1999). This challenge implies also the inclusion of new actors or protagonists, which are the subdued groups made invisible in the official history of Antarctica.

Antarctica: Narratives as "a" or "the" Mode of Knowledge

The Antarctica was the last continent to be incorporated to the space dominated by modernity. Its official discovery, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, marks the beginning of a history that presents certain particularities, not only in its content, but also in the way that it is usually told. Some versions of this history are more extensively distributed and known then others, as well as being more widely accepted. We understand that recurrences—in form and in content—construct and structure the master narratives of Antarctica. They reinforce the definition and the classification of aspects, moments, events, and processes within this history, the selection of certain elements over others and an ordering that gives it meaning. In other words, the narratives do not limit themselves to what is told or to the manner of telling. Instead, they are a form of conceptualizing history. What is told and how it is told "create" one (the) history. As archaeologists, we must ask: what is the role of archaeological material in the construction and reproduction of this history?

In this chapter, we discuss how narrative constitutes a mode of knowledge of Antarctica's past and we present archaeology as a space of rupture regarding the master narratives of Antarctic history. To do this, we first identified the master narratives which produce and reproduce the dominant histories of Antarctica, through its written and material forms. Secondly, we present archaeological evidence of the invisible histories of Antarctica. We understand that in historical archaeology . . . we walk in a uniquely dangerous space of the human past, a space between often very

powerful master narratives of cultural and social identity and much smaller, stranger, potentially subversive narratives of archaeological material (Johnson 1999, p. 34).

Archaeological practice offers a reimagining of the past, often calling for a revision of the master narratives rather than being dominated by them.

The concept of narrative is an interesting and controversial starting point for a discussion. Can the various discursive formations, labeled narratives in diverse fields be seen as the same sort of things? (Kreiswirth 2000). Narratives are discursive formations which have been understood as representations of a sequence of events. They have been defined from either a key concept of narrativity or from its use (Rudrum 2005). The theoretical conceptualization of narratives has been much discussed (Scholes et al. 1968; Mink 1970; White 1987; Ricoeur 1996, 1999, among others). Its form and content have been analyzed; its themes have been problematized, either as forms of fiction or as reality, as well as other possibilities. In historical archaeology, narratives have been evaluated from different points of view (Beaudry 2005; Johnson 1996, 1999; Wilkie 2006, and others). Regarding this, we believe that narratives present a compartmentalization of knowledge and a specific form of knowing.

In the case of Antarctica, narratives are institutionalized as "the" way of knowing the past of the white continent. The stories which are constructed are presented as exclusive and natural, in a way they are surrounded by insufficiency and without questioning. Thus, we understand that the master narratives regarding Antarctica are discursive formations that represent a specific version of the continent's history, which operate in written and material dimensions. We expand on these ideas in the following sections.

Narratives: The Written Dimension

In order to explore master narratives of the past in Antarctica we have studied some of the most widely spread versions of the Antarctic history. Therefore, we have focused on the ways the history of Antarctica has been structured by bibliography in the course of time. That is to say we identify recurrences in the way stories are told, as well as emphasis in mentioning some facts above others or in omitting some others altogether.

Visible Stories of Exploration

The history of Antarctica starts around 1820 with the discovery of the South Shetland Islands—not forgetting to mention Captain Cook's voyages as an important antecedent. All in all, the discovery appears as something controversial and hazardous over which there is no full agreement. There are different versions of the event of the discovery. The most widely spread versions associate discovery to an isolated self-contained event occurred by chance.

From 1820 onwards, Antarctica was explored by those who are now considered famous explorers such as Capt. Edward Bransfield (sent by the British Royal Navy to determine if the new land was part of a continent or a group of islands) and Capt. Thaddeus von Bellinghausen (who commanded Russia's first government sponsored Antarctic expedition). Exploration campaigns organized by different governments continued up to around 1840 charting the Antarctic geography and landscapes. We can mention Capt. Jules Dumont D'Urville from France, the American, Capt. Charles Wilkes and the British, Capt. James Clark Ross. Then, there appears a gap or silence lasting 50 years (from 1840 to 1890) nevertheless, the presence of sealers and whalers extends—on and off—during the whole of the nineteenth century with an uncertain starting date for either activity.

It is said that in 1890 after half a century of neglect, interest in Antarctica was revived. The 1890s marked the beginning of the "Heroic Age," a period of extensive Antarctic exploration sponsored by scientific societies after the resolution adopted in the Sixth International Geographical Congress (London, 1895) sixteen exploring expeditions from nine different countries visited the continent. It was a period of innovation and hardship in an extremely hostile, scarcely-known environment. Only to mention some, we can say that different parts of the Antarctic Peninsula and the islands of the Scotia Arc were explored by Adrien de Gerlache (1897–1898) from Belgium, the British Southern Cross Expedition led by Carsten E. Borchgrevink, and the Swedish South Polar Expedition under Otto Nordenskjöld (1901–1904). There was also the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition led by William S. Bruce (1902–1904), two French Antarctic Expeditions led by Jean Baptiste Charcot (1903–1905 and 1908–1910), the German South Polar Expedition (1901–1903) by Erich von Drygalski and the Australasian Antarctic Expedition by Douglas Mawson (1911–1914), Nobu Shirase and the Japanese Antarctic Expedition (1910–1912), Wilhelm Filchner and the second German Antarctic Expedition (1911–1912).

The early twentieth century was a time of great volume and quality of charts and scientific observations. This period was characterized by long inland journeys and several expeditions—Robert F. Scott and The National Antarctic Expedition (1901–1904), Ernest H. Shackleton and the British Antarctic Expedition (1907–1909)—the main objective of which was reaching the South Pole. Symbolically, the arrival at the South Pole by the Norwegian Roald Amundsen (The Norwegian Antarctic Expedition 1910–1912) and the British Capt. Robert Falcon Scott (The British Antarctic Expedition 1910–1913) and The Imperial Transantarctic Expedition (1914–1917) of Ernst Shackelton (1917–1922) mark the end of the "Heroic Age."

Invisible Stories of Exploitation

At the beginning of nineteenth century explorers' descriptions of the Antarctic seas aroused other interests linked to the exploitation of the resources in the Southern lands and sea. Their reports of great quantities of seals and whales in those high latitudes immediately attracted other characters to the making of the Antarctic history. We are

talking about the sealers whose presence in Antarctica during the nineteenth century is contemporary to that of the well-known explorers and even prior to theirs. However, the widely spread versions of the history of Antarctica do not refer to it. Only very few of these new characters are known by their full names. Most of them are just anonymous men representing the fast and wild expansion of the capitalist system.

The most widely spread versions of the history of Antarctica focus their attention on the "Heroic Age;" nevertheless, it is important to say here that 1890 is also considered as the starting point of the industrial whaling exploitation in Antarctica when Norwegian and Scottish whaling firms sent ships (1892–1893) to investigate the possibilities of whaling around the Antarctic Peninsula. This marked the beginning of a new period of exploitation—industrial whaling—which included the settlement of factories in Antarctica. The data officially registered, mention imposing figures as regards the whales hunted and the facilities displayed in Antarctica, that is: floating factories, shore factories, factory ships, and catchers from 1906 to 1930. Such a project meant hundreds of men involved in the making of thousands of individual stories taking place in the Antarctic landscapes in the early twentieth century, which are scarcely mentioned in the history of Antarctica, that talk about the voyages of explorers taking place at the same time.

Master narratives of Antarctica appear as sequences of events related to well-known characters at precise dates. Such events do not appear within the frame of any process but as isolated self-contained facts. It is a story of heroes, dates, and events. Our analyses suggest there is a conceptualization of Antarctic history in terms of exploration versus exploitation. Stories associated with exploration definitely play the leading role whereas those related to the exploitation of sea resources are subdued or simply omitted. This approach gives no opportunity to the insertion of those other stories in which there are no well-known characters, no precise dates, or no memorable events: that is to say the stories of sealers and whalers which form part of the process of incorporating this region to the modern world.

Narratives: The Material Dimension

Antarctica's cultural heritage is a unique testimony to the human presence on the last continent to be discovered and incorporated into the modern world. The international nature of the Antarctic territory leads to unique scenarios when determining what aspects of its history are to be celebrated. All nations that are signatories of the Antarctic Treaty have a voice when selecting which elements of the cultural heritage should be conserved and which can be left to the mercy of time and the environment. Its conservation is made in the name of humanity.

In the 1970s there awakes an awareness of the need for preserving historical sites and measures are taken in this sense. "The need to protect historic sites and monuments became apparent as the number of expeditions to the Antarctic increased." At the Seventh Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Wellington (1972) it was agreed that a list of historic sites and monuments be created. So far 84 sites have been

identified. All of them are monuments—human artifacts rather than areas—and many of them are in close proximity to scientific stations. Historic sites and monuments which have been included in the list may not be damaged, removed, or destroyed. Successive Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings have developed guidelines to ensure that the process for designating historic sites and monuments under the Antarctic Treaty fully complies with the objective of identifying, protecting, and preserving the historic and cultural values of Antarctica.

The 2009 guideline established that,

> Parties who wish to nominate a particular historic site and/or monument should address in the proposal one or more of the following: (a) a particular event of importance in the history of science or exploration of Antarctica occurred at the place; (b) a particular association with a person who played an important role in the history of science or exploration in Antarctica; (c) a particular association with a notable feat of endurance or achievement; (d) be representative of, or forming part of, some wide-ranging activity that has been important in the development and knowledge of Antarctica; (e) bear particular technical, historical, cultural, or architectural value in its materials, design, or method of construction; (f) have the potential, through study, to reveal information or to educate people about significant human activities in Antarctica; (g) bear symbolic or commemorative value for people of many nations.

Visible Historic Sites as Heritage

Now then, "what is the result of the process of designation of historical sites in Antarctica?" We have wondered what these sites commemorate and which stories they preserve. In order to answer these questions we analyzed the list or sites designated up to now and we drew a time-line distributing these sites according to the dates mentioned. The number of sites designated has varied in the course of time; at present there are 84 in the list—even if five of these have been withdrawn for different reasons.

For the purpose of our analysis we focused on the first 100 years of the history of Antarctica and we assessed the 35 historical sites which were designated to commemorate the period of time extending from 1820 to 1920. We observed a clearly distinctive representation of the different moments; and there appeared a great emphasis placed on the early twentieth century (Fig. 1). Out of the 35 sites, 30 commemorate events that took place during the "Heroic Age." Only 5 of the 35 commemorate previous exploratory expeditions which took place during the nineteenth century. None of these sites are related or even mention the sealers' presence and only two refer to whalers' activities during all that period. One of them commemorates Henryk Bull and Capt. Leonard Kristensen's whaling expedition on board the Antarctic in 1895 and the other one the Whaling Station in Deception Island. This site also commemorates the longest period of settlement on Antarctic lands which was from 1912 to 1931.

We highlighted three results of our analysis which are relevant to our interest. First the overrepresentation of the sites related to the explorations taking place during the "Heroic Age" when compared to events and processes occurring in other periods

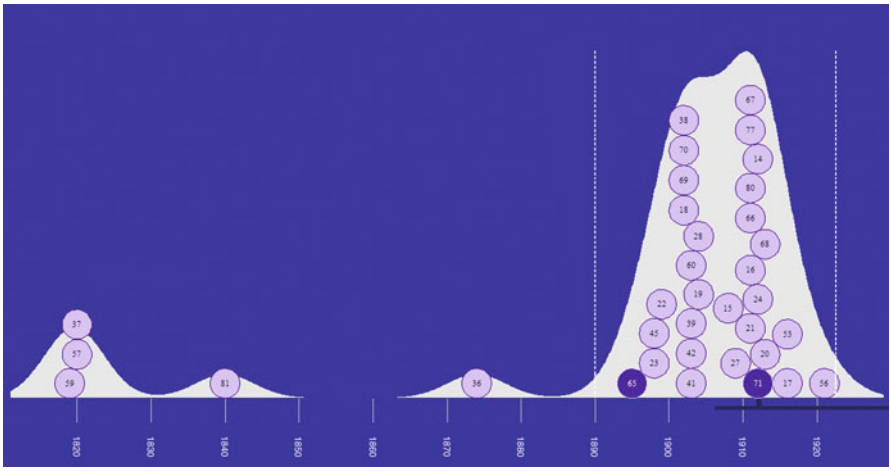

Fig. 1 Designated Antarctic historic sites and monuments by dates. The *light* ones commemorate events linked to Antarctic Exploration and the *dark* ones linked to Antarctic Exploitation (whaling)

of time. Second, the precision in dates, characters, and events taking place at those precise places designated as historical sites or monuments. And the absolute silence about the presence of sealers and whalers.

We have also wondered what role both material remains and historical narratives play in the preservation of the Antarctic memory. The grounds for assessing the significance of sites for their designation are taken from written information, especially from explorer's accounts, detailing their Antarctic experiences. These accounts have been the main source of information in reconstructing the historic sites as "time capsules". However, there exist discrepancies between what is written and the archaeological record, and in this way "the problematic relations between public and private memory, and between history and fantasy, in the construction of both an individual and a collective past" are expressed (Suleiman 2004, p. 76).

The sites designated preserve a history of Antarctica which feeds back on its most widely spread or known versions. Thus, the idea of a history of heroes, events, and dates becomes stronger. And in it there is no place for anonymous whalers and sealers who produced no relevant events at not definite dates. It is interesting to point out that in the last guideline, items—d, e, and f—open a door to the designation as historical sites or monuments of the places where material remains of whalers or sealers' activities were found. However, for the time being no example of those items appears on the list.

Historical Archaeology in South Shetlands

Archaeological research focused on the presence of nineteenth century sealers in the South Shetland Islands has been developing for decades and a program of systematic survey of the islands continues (Stehberg and Nilo 1983; Lewis and Simpson 1987;

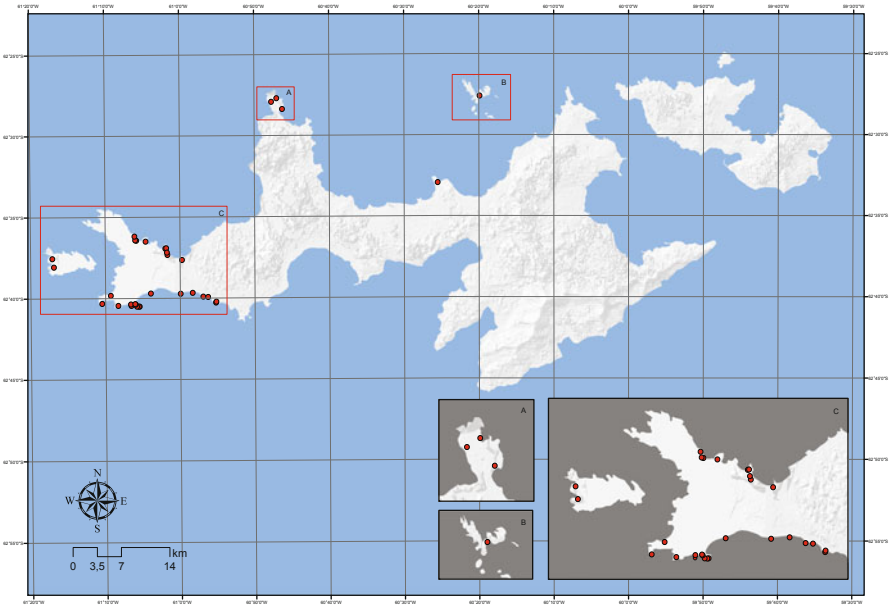

Fig. 2 Map showing the archaeological sites identified so far in the South Shetland Islands. **a** Cape Shirreff in Livingston Island, **b** Desolation Island, **c** Peninsula Byers in Livingston Island and Rugged Island

Stehberg and Cabeza 1987; Martín 1996; Stehberg and Lucero 1995a, b; Lucero and Stehberg 1996; Stehberg and Lucero 1996, Senatore and Zarankin 1999; Zarankin and Senatore 1996, 2000, 2005, 2007; Stehberg 2003, 2004; Pearson and Stehberg 2006; Pearson et al. 2008, 2010; Stehberg et al. 2008; Senatore et al. 2008; Zarankin et al. 2011). There are different projects with specific goals and interests. However, archeologists coming from Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Australia are working together by sharing information.

Our research started in 1995. From that moment on, we developed several fieldwork seasons in the islands. We concentrated our efforts on a specific area: Byers Peninsula on Livingston Island. The Island was frequently visited by sealers during the nineteenth century, and—at least until today—it has shown the highest concentrations of sealing camps in the South Shetlands (Fig. 2). Byers Peninsula covers an area of 72 km^2, and an extension of 80 km from east to west and 3–14 km from north to south. Archaeological activities on Byers Peninsula combined the survey of the area and the excavation of specific locations.

We are interested in discussing the first attempts of the modern world to incorporate a hostile region, completely unknown before the nineteenth century, to its economic and political boundaries. Our perspective is not centered in studying a particular event. On the contrary, we are devoted to the study of a historical process. We worked at a macro level, seeking to understand the nationalist and capitalist network of interests reaching the South Shetlands at the beginning of the century. The project

Fig. 3 Archaeological site Playa Sur 1 belonging to nineteenth century sealers' camps in Byers Peninsula, Livingston Island, South Shetlands

also includes the study of the incorporation of the region at a micro level: that is to say by studying the life of the people who occupied and exploited Antarctica for the first time.

The study of the sealers' presence is not limited to the study of one particular site of "apparent historical relevance." Only in Byers Peninsula more than 20 archaeological sites were reported. None of them have any single outstanding historical relevance. All of them give information about a history that is still being built. Narratives cannot be used to determine the relevance or assess a particular site or to take the measures for its further preservation. Therefore, narratives do not have a univocal or determining role in the study of the sites and remains left by sealers. Archaeological and historical sources have provided information on different aspects of sealers' first steps in the South Shetlands.

As from the archaeological tasks carried out in Byers Peninsula the characteristics of the various sealing camps were studied. The results of such surveys allowed the bringing forward of some tendencies. Sealers' camps are formed by stonefenced areas in the shape of enclosures: that is spaces limited by piled stone walls and also by other structures in various shapes. In all cases they were built using rocks or whale bones. In general, rock formations or caves available on the shore and providing natural shelter were used as part of the structure (Fig. 3). The shapes and sizes of these spaces are varied.

The enclosures seem to respond to a prompt building for which it was not necessary to transport any elements. Different questions such as function, segmentation, and structuring guided the analysis of the inner space. Likewise, the inner organization of the structures, as well as the use of the surrounding space and the reoccupation or reutilization of the shelters were studied.

According to our theoretical and methodological stand the material world is placed in the center of our research. Therefore, it is assumed that it is possible to learn about the life of people if we study their material world and we interpret the role it played in the definition of social relationships. Archaeological surveys and excavations have shown that a large number of sealing sites were established in the region. There was

variation in the size and spatial organization of these places, as well as in the number of people disembarked and in the social organization of the groups. Once on land, sealers created their own living spaces where most of their everyday activities took place. The sealing strategy implies alternate cohabitation of large groups on board or of smaller groups in camps on land. It is interesting to reflect on the changes in socialization as expeditions went by. Archaeological excavations showed evidence that groups remained isolated from one another—some on land and some on board. Sealing structures were primarily created with local resources. Therefore, it is clear that sealing companies did not provide workers with the elements necessary to build the shelters. Planning of the sealing strategy was associated with the reoccupation of the same shelters or the idea of leaving elements behind to be used in further campaigns. It is possible that sealing strategies changed throughout the nineteenth century. The reconstruction of sealers' daily practices became finally relevant.

Final Words

In this chapter, we have discussed the relationship between typological thinking and the construction of the official history or of master narratives for the Antarctica. A classification and exclusion scheme has structured the way of looking at the white continent's past. This way of looking at the past has been accepted as the truth and assumed as a representative of everything and everyone. We hope that we have demonstrated that, for Antarctica, the narratives constitute "the" mode of knowledge of its past. To this end, we identified the master narratives which in their written and material dimensions produce and reproduce the visible history of Antarctica. We presented archaeology as a point of rupture for the thought schemes that are implicit in the master narratives of Antarctic history.

Our analyses suggest that the master narratives of Antarctic past present a conceptualization of Antarctic history, in terms of exploration versus exploitation. Written and material dimensions of the master narratives offer a version of the past. The histories related to scientific exploration are "preserved," by celebrating specific events, dates, personalities, and specific locations; whereas stories associated with the exploitation of Antarctic resources have been, and are still, silenced and forgotten. It is worth mentioning that many of the stories of sealers and whalers carry no specific protagonists, exact dates, or apparent "historical relevance" to be commemorated. Even if there are numerous material remains widely dispersed, they are scarcely considered in the conservation agenda for Antarctic heritage.

The schemes presented in the official history of Antarctica make homogeneous what is heterogeneous and they hide away pluralities. Historical archaeology is seen here as a different standpoint, focused on the study of processes, working with the material remains of ordinary people and their everyday life, incorporating new characters and invisible stories into the history of Antarctica. Through those stories, we may begin to overcome the authoritarianism of the typological classifications in the official history. A new past is open and a new present waits.

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Testing a Model of Site Location in the Alto Magdalena, Colombia

Víctor González Fernández

Introduction

In Colombia, Wessex, Hawaii, Southeastern USA, and other regions where long sequences of chiefdom development have been attested, the data at hand shows that the residential settlement pattern was rather dispersed (Drennan 1987, 2000; Earle 1977; Renfrew 1973; Steponaitis 1978) in contrast to nucleated patterns seen in societies of a similar scale in regions such as Highland Mesoamerica, the Central Andes, and Mesopotamia, better characterized by a settlement pattern of dense villages and towns. It is then an error to characterize chiefdoms as highly centralized societies in demographic and economic sense. However, centralization is one of the basic principles that served to define the chiefdom type of society in the anthropological literature (Earle 1978).

In what now is Colombia, a pattern of dispersed individual residential groups that could eventually build up larger social units prevailed during Conquest and Colonial times (Drennan 1995). This pattern of dispersion was never well understood by the Spaniards, who tried very hard to force the indigenous population to live in small, grid-plan settlements (Villamarín and Villamarín 2003, p. 129). The Spanish colonial administration learned that there were organized communities, often under the rule of *caciques* and *capitanes* and that through them it was possible to exact tribute from dispersed "pueblos" (Colmenares 1970). In some parts of highland Mesoamerica, where chiefdoms did not last long because they gave way to other kinds of societies (Drennan 1991), the Spanish *conquistadores* encountered a nucleated settlement pattern that was in some ways similar to European villages. Compared with them, some Colombian chiefdoms may have looked less "civilized."

While different settlement pattern systems are sometimes used to directly reflect different types of social and political systems, the location model offered by Steponaitis (1978) permits an evaluation of economic aspects of chiefly organization that

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could explain specific spatial arrangements. This author contrasts a market economy (where goods can travel between secondary centers) with the tribute-collecting system of complex chiefdoms described by ethnographic works (where tribute flows vertically, from commoners to chiefs, and from secondary chiefs to the regional chief). To Steponaitis such tribute is a basic feature of what anthropologists have called chiefdoms. Thus, modeling of particular spatial patterns of archaeological remains as related to tribute flow would help to understand internal dynamics of past chiefdoms. Using this model does not imply adherence to a particular way of understanding chiefdoms or societies but rather expresses the need to use, reuse, test, improve and create new conceptual tools to understand social phenomena better.

This article presents an application of the model of Steponaitis to study the location of ceremonial/funerary sites in the Alto Magdalena region (Fig. 1), where chiefdoms developed during the Formative (1000 BC–1 AD) and Regional Classic (1 AD–900 AD) periods (Drennan and Quattrin 1995) in order to evaluate to what extent spatial arrangements in the region can be explained by the importance of a tributary system.

Recent interpretations of the changes in settlement patterns in a sector of the Alto Magdalena (Drennan 1993; Drennan and Quattrin 1995; González 2007) have proposed that social and religious bases were more important for the formation of small polities than economic ones, contradicting models that relate chiefdom development mainly to ecological diversity (Service 1962), control of resources (Earle 1978; Gilman 1981) or population pressure (Carneiro 1981).

During the Regional Classic period, the representation of high ranked individuals in stone statues accompanying their tombs in burial mounds provides very clear evidence of social differentiation (Drennan 1995). Political centralization has been attested in some sectors of the region by the settlement concentrations that cluster around the special burial mounds (Drennan and Quattrin 1995). A regional survey of the Valle de la Plata region shows that sites with monumental burial mounds of the Regional Classic period are located near the center of clusters of dispersed residential sites (Drennan 1985). Here, the spatial distribution of the monumental and funerary sites from the Regional Classic period (Sotomayor and Uribe 1987) is used to represent the spatial distribution of chiefdom centers, assuming that it reflects the distribution of loose demographic concentrations. In order to apply the model offered by Steponaitis (1978), relative importance of the chiefly sites during the Regional Classic period is measured here in number of burial mounds and number of stone statues found inside those mounds.

By testing the location model offered by Steponaitis, we will investigate the importance of tribute collection for shaping settlement patterns of Regional Classic period chiefdoms in the Alto Magdalena. If the expectations of the model are not met, the study would support the idea that in regions such as the Alto Magdalena tribute was not collected (or if collected did not affect spatial distribution) and would put in question the centrality of tribute for chiefdoms. If, however, the evidence fits the model then tribute may have been at least as important to Alto Magdalena chiefdoms as Steponaitis found it to be for Alabama polities. The analysis of the way the model describes spatial distribution and the variation that is not explained by it, will guide interpretation of the peculiarities of the Alto Magdalena case.

Fig. 1 Map of Colombia, showing the location of the Alto Magdalena region

Testing the model required cumbersome calculations of centers of gravity and the evaluation of the effect of movement costs in a rugged topography, where the "friction" of the terrain had to be taken into account. Thus a GIS system was used to import digitized topographic information and the location of all Regional Classic monumental/funerary sites inside a 1,000 km^2 study area. A portion of this area, of 300 km^2 defined so as to include most of the known ceremonial sites in the wider Alto Magdalena region has been studied by full coverage systematic regional surveys (Drennan 2000, pp. 96–100, Figs 51–52) that ensure accurate location of most sites in the region.

The evaluation of the location model of political centers in the Alto Magdalena region has implications for our understanding of settlement patterns in regions such as Wessex (Renfrew 1973) and Hawaii (Earle 1977, 1978). This work contributes to previous studies in the region that analyzed spatial patterns in scattered settlements (Jaramillo 1994; Quattrin 1995), excavated and reconstructed ceremonial centers (Duque and Cubillos 1979), and analyzed the distribution of population in and around those centers (Drennan and Quattrin 1995; González 2007).

The Model

Vincas Steponaitis's model for the location of chiefly centers (Steponaitis 1978) was proposed for "complex chiefdoms" and specifically applied by its author to the archaeological data from the region around Moundville, Alabama (USA). The model is based on a series of assumptions. First, it assumes the existence of a tribute system in which, in contrast to a market economy, the relationship between residential groups and regional centers is not direct. Second, tribute flows from residential groups to local or minor centers and then to regional centers. Third, the regional center directly interacts only with residential groups in the immediate area of influence. Fourth, the costs of maintaining the central institution increase with system complexity. Fifth, chiefdom systems have a limit to the demands of the chiefs in goods and labor and if the demands are too strong there is always a possibility of deposition of chief by rebellion. Sixth, a concern of chiefly elites is to minimize the pressure on the tributary population without reducing the flow of tribute, for it resorts to relocate chiefly centers efficiently over the landscape. Given these assumptions, the model predicts that to minimize the costs of moving tribute, minor centers will tend to cluster near the regional center.

If political centralization at the regional center is strong and tributes are important, then the optimal location of the main chiefly center will be determined with respect to the location of the lower order centers within its political domain. The index of efficiency $\left(E = \frac{\sum {R_i}^2}{\sum {D_i}^2}\right)$ measures the degree to which the actual location approximates the ideal location, where R_i is the distance from each minor center to the center of gravity of the minor centers (CGMC) and D_i is every distance from a minor center to the actual location of the main chiefly center. A value close to 1 means that the regional center is near the ideal location in relation to the minor centers. The ideal location (CGMC) is the average value for the coordinates of the locations of all the minor centers, on an X, Y coordinate system.

If political centralization is less strong, the model predicts that the main chiefly center will be located somewhere between the CGMC and the center of gravity determined only by the location of local residential groups directly related to that center.

One implication of the features of this model is that it requires knowledge of the boundaries of the political unit and that of the hierarchy of the sites in the region. To apply this model to the Alto Magdalena, it required developing a way to assign political ranks to ceremonial sites and to approximate boundaries of the political system.

Ranking the Ceremonial Centers

Beginning with the earliest archaeological work on the San Agustín culture that was defined for the Alto Magdalena region, it became evident that the largest and more elaborated monumental/funerary site is Mesitas, located 2 km west of the municipal town of San Agustín, Huila (Duque 1967)—currently serving as the headquarters of the Archaeological Park of San Agustin. The Mesitas complex has four discrete funerary mound sites (named A through D), and it has the earliest dates and also some of the biggest earthworks (Duque and Cubillos 1988). One of its sites, Mesita B, has the most striking and abundant examples of monumental stone statues and burial constructions. Mesitas is one of 2–3 dozen Regional Classic monumental centers of varying size and elaboration that have been located in the region. However, despite decades of archaeological research concentrated mainly in these burial-and-statue sites no standard systematic way for comparing sites has been adopted.

Studies of residential settlement patterns have allowed a comparison of political units (Drennan and Quattrin 1995; Drennan 2000) through careful study of the population densities that were probably attracted around ceremonial and political centers. This work is seen as complementary to such studies by evaluating differences between sites based exclusively on the characteristics of each monumental/funerary center.

The remains of ceremonial centers include monumental tombs that show great variation (Drennan 1995). At the simpler end of the scale, most burials include a slab tomb that is not associated with stone statues. If these were covered with an earthen mound, it has disappeared or it is only a few centimeters high. The first distinction that can be drawn is then between tombs with or without statues and in this study only sites with statues are considered. Most of the sites with statues have only one mound, while a handful of sites (also more elaborate in general terms) have several mounds. Since a site with several mounds is bigger and probably represents greater chiefly activity, number of mounds will be used as a proxy measure of the size or importance of a central place. Burial mounds vary greatly in shape, preparation of the stone slabs, number of burials associated to a mound, size of the mound itself, and number of accompanying statues. Of all those variables, number of statues is probably the most diagnostic measure and thus it is used here to represent degree of elaboration or investment in the ceremonial site. A straightforward way for ranking the sites then seems to use number of mounds and number of statues as measures of size and elaboration of the monumental centers, and to combine the rankings of these variables.

Table 1 shows the calculation of the rankings on size and elaboration for all known sites with statues inside the study area and other data. The information for this table was based on Sotomayor and Uribe (1987), with more precise locations obtained during the fieldwork for the Programa de Arqueología Regional en el Alto Magdalena (Drennan 2000) and additional fieldwork carried out for the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia-ICANH in 2006.

Table 1 Lists of all sites with stone statues in the study area, showing site number, name, number of statues, number of mounds, rankings, and X, Y coordinates (IGAC Coordinate System-Origin Bogotá West)

Number	Name	Statues	Rank of statues	Mounds	Rank of mounds	X	Y
2	Mesita B	63	42.0	3	39.5	1086959	700124
29	Idolos	18	41.0	7	42.0	1093100	703550
1	Mesita A	15	39.5	2	36.0	1087147	699970
3	Mesita C	15	39.5	1	22.5	1086720	699718
12	Pelota	12	37.5	2	36.0	1087306	703198
30	Piedras	12	37.5	4	41.0	1097670	709716
19	Parada	9	36.0	1	22.5	1082592	697958
13	Tablon	8	35.0	1	22.5	1089341	701891
7	A Lavapatas	7	33.0	1	22.5	1086173	699692
27	Jabon	7	33.0	3	39.5	1083479	706178
20	Uyumbe	7	33.0	1	22.5	1091317	699045
18	Estrella	6	30.0	1	22.5	1087889	699307
28	Obando	6	30.0	1	22.5	1086803	706050
22	Sevilla	6	30.0	1	22.5	1086801	698520
15	Moyas	5	27.5	1	22.5	1088805	700641
8	Quinchana	5	27.5	1	22.5	1071259	705184
32	Granada	3	24.5	1	22.5	1091202	702111
16	La Floresta	3	24.5	1	22.5	1088585	700443
24	Lavaderos	3	24.5	2	36.0	1087416	694815
10	Quebradillas	3	24.5	2	36.0	1081660	700303
40	Alto de la China	2	15.5	0	6.0	1084956	702272
39	Arauca	2	15.5	0	6.0	1084579	698913
17	Cabuyal	2	15.5	1	22.5	1087726	700993
9	Cascajal	2	15.5	1	22.5	1081236	705171
42	El Agrado	2	15.5	0	6.0	1088610	699775
31	Guacas	2	15.5	2	36.0	1093655	701811
46	Hornitos	2	15.5	1	22.5	1091909	708757
38	La Vega	2	15.5	0	6.0	1082860	703927
25	Matanzas	2	15.5	1	22.5	1096746	697248
4	Mesita D	2	15.5	1	22.5	1087039	700452
37	Palo Mocho	2	15.5	1	22.5	1080050	701644
23	Tabor	2	15.5	1	22.5	1088444	696740
48	SA1648	2	15.5	0	6.0	1104304	704057
41	Bajo Junín	1	4.5	0	6.0	1089479	705531
33	Betania	1	4.5	1	22.5	1091350	704000
43	El Mortio	1	4.5	0	6.0	1093204	700264
45	El Rosario	1	4.5	0	6.0	1086054	693223
44	El Templete	1	4.5	0	6.0	1089952	700339
49	SA0019	1	4.5	1	22.5	1086512	700788
50	SA0877	1	4.5	0	6.0	1093873	706634
47	SA1638	1	4.5	0	6.0	1103540	707186
51	Tapias	2	15.5	1	22.5	1078201	700347

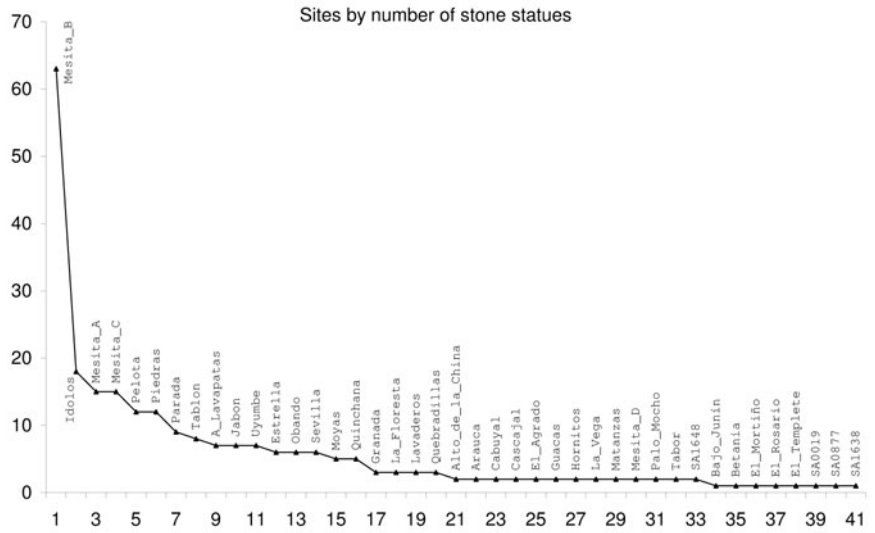

Fig. 2 Plot of the sites in the study region ordered by number of stone statues

The number of statues and mounds is very low for most of the sites. Only 11 sites have more than 6 statues (Mesita B site has 63) and only 9 sites have more than 1 mound (Idolos has 7, Alto de las Piedras has 4 and Mesita B has 3). Grouping the 4 areas of the Mesitas into one site, it shows clear preponderance, with 95 statues and 7 mounds.

The second ranked site is Idolos, 7 km to the northeast, featuring the same amount of mounds but fewer statues decorating the tombs, and the third ranked site is Alto de las Piedras, located 7 km farther to the northeast, featuring 4 mounds and 12 statues. The final conclusion is that the site of Mesitas, and the location known as Mesita B in particular is the best candidate for the location of main regional chiefly center site in the study area, and therefore will be considered the region's center for the model proposed by Steponaitis (1978, pp. 436–437).

To show in a more graphic way the differences that these sites reflect in elaboration, Fig. 2 shows the change in the number of statues. Note that if we consider Mesita B apart from the other areas in Mesitas site, Mesitas still appears as an outlier. The characteristics of the mound sites permit us then to depict the region as organized in a steep hierarchy of size and elaboration of funerary complexes, with Mesitas at the top. The other 40 sites in the region might be interpreted as minor centers and in the light of settlement pattern information from the Valle de la Plata (Drennan and Quattrin 1995) as the social or political centers of small and loosely integrated communities.

The question of this chapter, that is, the importance of a tributary system for these spatial patterns, can be begun to be answered by addressing the issue of the amount of labor that was organized for the construction of mound and statue complexes.

Steponaitis (1978, pp. 446–447) argues that the amount of tribute collected by the paramount chief should be inversely related to the amount of labor that the chiefs in secondary centers were able to mobilize for monument construction. The assumption that the construction of the largest monuments required large amounts of labor, or at least more labor than the normally available at the local community is implicit. In the Alto Magdalena, however, monumental constructions were apparently built on a local scale. Although it is true that the largest mounds probably required more than a handful of workmen, most of the mounds could be made by two or three sculptors in less than a week of work, at the rate sculptors achieve today in the region, utilizing a probably similar stone technology and producing similar statues on similar volcanic rocks. It is possible, then, that the differences observed between sites do not reflect strictly differences in tribute extraction, but rather other social and political circumstances. Alternatively, tribute might have been collected for purposes other than monument construction. In any case, if the importance of tribute flows argument is valid, we should expect the model of Steponaitis to explain the location of Mesita B and also deviations, if any, from the geographical CGMC.

Spatial Efficiency of Mesita B Location

CGMC is simply the mean X and mean Y coordinates obtained from the coordinates of all the minor chiefly centers related with a regional (paramount) chiefly center. In a tributary economy, minor centers collect tribute and send it to the regional center. The burden of transport cost to the major center will supposedly influence the chiefly elites to accommodate the location of the secondary centers as close as possible to the regional center's location. This major center in turn will be relocated by its chiefly elite near the CGMC in order to reduce transport costs of tributes flowing to it.

In order to calculate the relative location of Mesita B and the minor centers, an electronic coordinate system was created, and the location of every mounded site was digitized. Corrections to these locations were made by the author when data became available. The CGMC was calculated by extracting the digital map coordinates into a list of X and Y variables and calculating the mean of each variable. Fig. 3 shows a plot of the locations of the sites as points, including the location of Mesita B and the calculated CGMC as a triangle. Mesita B is located at $x = 1086959$ m, $y = 700124$ m and the CGMC is at $x = 1088250$ m, $y = 701631$ m. That is, Mesita B is 2 km to the southwest of the expected location. Even when eliminating five outliers located more than 10 km from the CGMC, Mesita B is not very near to its expected location. The CGMC in this case becomes $x = 1087905$ m, $y = 701163$ m, that is, after removing outliers, Mesita B shows a deviation to the southwest from the expected location of about 1.0 km. The spatial efficiency of Mesita B is surpassed in either case by a number of smaller sites. However, this does not mean that the model does not work at all. The spatial efficiency of Mesita B is fairly high ($E = 0.924$), in fact, comparable to the spatial efficiency for Moundville ($E = 0.940$) in its region. But why is there a deviation from the ideal location?

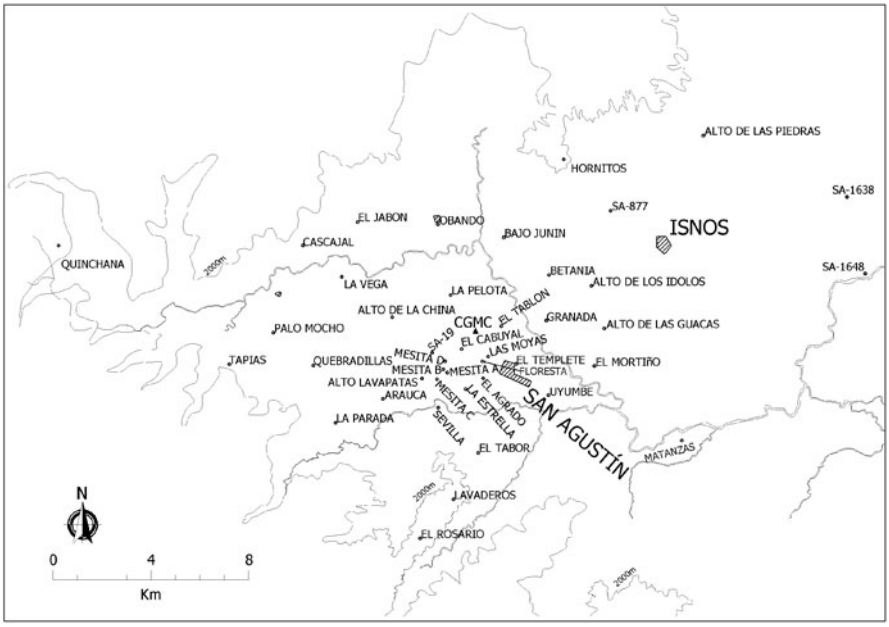

Fig. 3 Location of sites (*points*) and location of the calculated GCMC (*triangle*)

Influence of Slope

Several explanations for the deviation of Mesita B from the ideal location can be explored. First, the model expects the regional center to be located in order to reduce transport costs, and not necessarily exactly on the geometric center of the location of the minor centers. Therefore I evaluated the effect of what appears as the most striking feature of the landscape of the region, namely, the roughness of the terrain which can be measured by the slope. An electronic topographic map provided by the Programa de Arqueología Regional en el Alto Magdalena (Drennan 2000) with information for contour lines every 25 m, was imported into a GIS with a grid of 50 m of resolution in order to obtain a slope map (Fig. 4).

The slope for each cell was obtained by comparing the values of elevation for that cell to the values of all eight surrounding neighbors. This map describes slope as percentage of change over horizontal distance. The darker the area, the higher the slope is. The darkest areas that approximate a black tone are actually natural barriers, such as river gorges. It is clear from this map that the most serious problem in terms of transport costs is the Magdalena river gorge, which divides our study area in two parts, northeast and southwest. If we look back at Fig. 3, it is interesting to note that the deviation of the Mesita B site from the ideal location—in terms of the evaluated model—is actually perpendicular to this division but in the opposite direction than the model would predict! Adjusting for additional costs generated by slope, the new

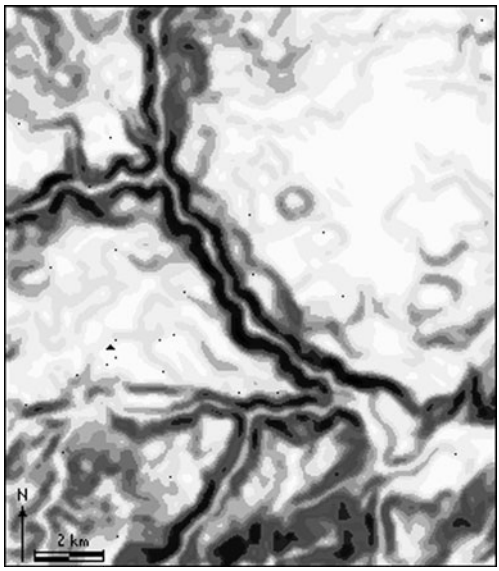

Fig. 4 Slope map of the study area. *White areas* have slopes of close to 0 %, *darkest areas* have slopes of around 75 %. *Triangle* represents the Mesita B site

location of the CGMC would move some to the northeast. In other words, if we take into account the effect slope has in the movement costs, the Mesita B site is located closer to the geometric center of all minor sites in horizontal distances than to the real least-effort center of gravity (taking slope in account).

Second, it is possible that the transport costs due to the high slope of the terrain were so great that the flow of tribute coming from outside smaller territories, especially from the northeast area separated by the Magdalena River, was minimal, and therefore did not affect the location of the center at Mesita B at all. In this case, we would need to reconsider the role of Mesitas as a regional center, in an economic and tributary sense, because tribute would not be moving to a single center in the study area.

One way to approximate the effect slope could have in the transport costs from or to any ceremonial site is to use the slope map as a "friction map" and calculate costs of movement from site locations, measuring cumulative cost in slope values of moving through the terrain, in order to obtain a "cost map" of moving from any site (Fig. 5). This map was obtained by calculating for each cell, the least-cost distance to a ceremonial site through the "slope map" (Fig. 4). The map in Fig. 5 continues to show the divide east-west but it becomes clearer that there are two big clusters, each of roughly the same size (10 km wide) at both sides of the Magdalena River and other smaller clusters (more clearly to the northwest and the southwest). These clusters are not only clusters of sites: They are clusters of sites located efficiently from each other in the valley bottoms of an artificial surface of movement costs. The cluster to the southwest of the river has four times more sites with statues than the cluster northeast of the river, but the two clusters contain a comparable amount of area of easy access. The smaller clusters, perhaps could be considered to be separate polities. Each of these clusters would seem to be focused on a different ceremonial site of comparable high rank–this will be expanded later.

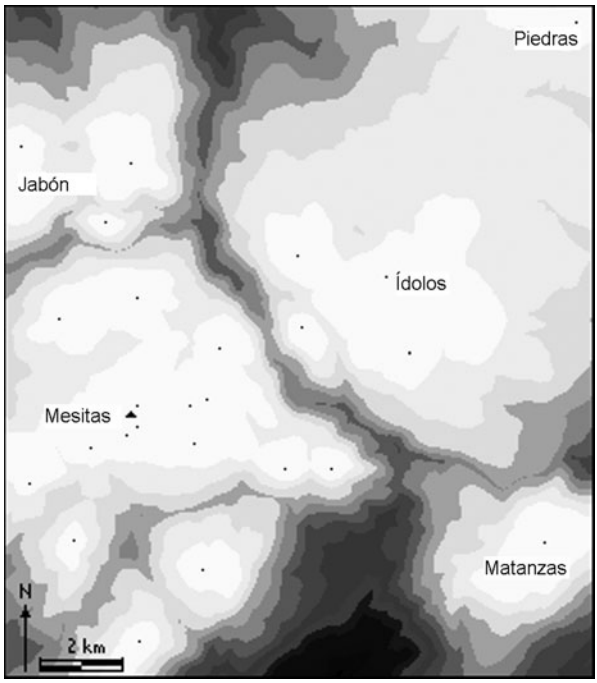

Fig. 5 Map of relative cost of movement. *White areas* are areas with easiest access from selected sites (*points*). *Darkest areas* are of very difficult access from any site. The *triangle* represents the Mesita B site

The division in clusters permits us to consider Steponaitis's model at a different scale or level of integration. The spatial distribution of separate clusters, based on an adjusted map that warps space according to transport costs, and the fact that spatial location of the apparent main regional center is not what was expected from the point of view of reducing costs of tribute flow, permits us to propose that the chiefdoms, or tributary systems of the Alto Magdalena were probably organized in polities that were smaller than the whole study area. These polities appear to be of roughly 10 km in diameter, judging by the size of the lighter (or easier access) areas in Fig. 5. This is consistent with the results of the archaeological survey in the area of the Valle de la Plata, 40 km to the northeast, which has shown the formation of political units of this size clustered around monumental sites (Drennan and Quattrin 1995; Drennan 2000).

Spatial Efficiency Inside Smaller Polities

The smaller polities, measuring about 10 km in diameter defined by the distribution of cluster areas of low movement costs can be considered as separate units, for testing of Steponaitis's model. When the 23 cases contained in the cluster just southwest of the Magdalena River (Fig. 6), are used to calculate spatial efficiency (E), the new CGMC is then located at x = 1086930 m, y = 699992 m (represented by a cross, just

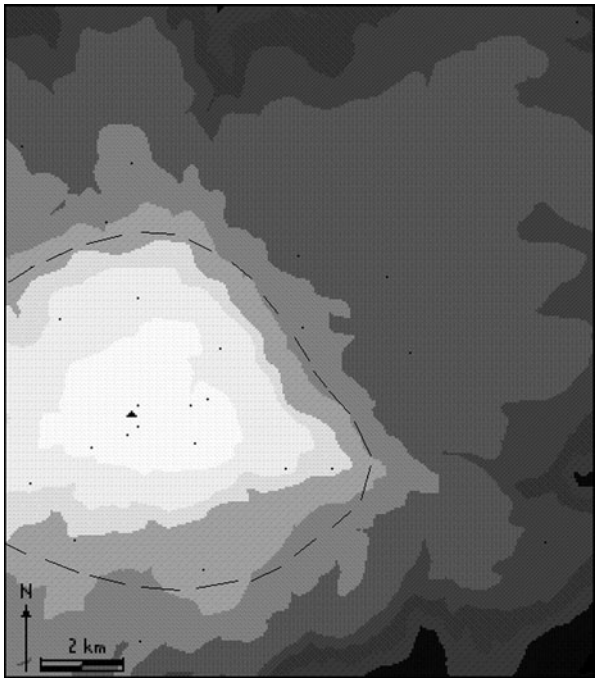

Fig. 6 Map of costs of moving from Mesita B, showing the proposed limits for a polity located west of the Magdalena river. *White areas* are easiest to reach; *darkest areas* are of very difficult access from Mesita B

south of Mesita A in Fig. 3). The spatial efficiency of Mesita B inside this cluster is very high (E = 0.998) and the deviation of the actual location of Mesita B from the expected location in the model in this case is only 135 m.

When the eight cases contained in the cluster north-east of the Magdalena river are used to calculate its CGMC, the expected location of a center is at x = 1092097, y = 704158 (represented by a cross, located between Betania and Alto de los Ídolos in Fig. 3). The closest site to this expected location is Ídolos, which, not surprisingly, is the second highest ranked ceremonial site in the entire region in terms of size and elaboration of monuments (Table 1). The spatial efficiency of Idolos inside its own cluster is high (E = 0.901). The deviation from the ideal location of Idolos is of 845 m to the southwest, a deviation in the expected direction, given the more difficult access to the areas located to the southwest of this cluster (Fig. 5).

A conclusion drawn from these data is that, when considering small polities, spanning around 10 km in diameter, the expectations of Steponaitis's model are better met in the region under consideration. A second conclusion is that the difficulties of moving through the terrain apparently affected the shape of the polities. A third conclusion is that given the good fit of the model inside the small polities, the chiefdoms of the Alto Magdalena may have had a tributary organization or a similar phenomenon in which transport costs were important in shaping the form of territories and in determining the exact locations of the major ceremonial (monumental and burial) centers inside their territories. A fourth conclusion is that the evaluation of the location model shows that chiefdoms of the Alto Magdalena were probably

not integrated economically at very wide regional level, at least not in the clearly hierarchical and centralized way expected by the model. The information from San Agustín suggests that perhaps this was due to both the insufficient mechanisms of the chiefly elites to exact tribute and the high transport costs due to a rugged environment.

Investment in Monument Building

One of the additional implications of the model of Steponaitis is that the size and elaboration of the monuments at the minor centers will change with their distance from the major centers. The more distant minor centers will invest more in their own monuments rather than directing tributes to the major centers (Steponaitis 1978, pp. 446–448). Minor centers that are adjacent to the major centers, given smaller transport costs will be willing to direct more tribute to major centers. As a result, major centers will have a disproportionate amount of monument investment, and outward, the more distant a center is from the major center, the larger their own monumental activity will be. This kind of relationship does not require a region to be politically or economically unified. In other words, a center that is located very far away could be as large as the major center, and in fact it will be considered a major center itself. The same can be true of a series of economically independent chiefdoms that participate in the same religious or ceremonial activities. The more separated two centers are from each other, the less effort will be directed to the eventual ceremonial activities at the other's location.

Such eventual ceremonial activities might include in the Alto Magdalena the ceremonies at the death of influential chiefs (Drennan 1995). Although this kind of "inter-chiefdom" relationship might foment the investment in ceremonial activity, it does not involve the transport of the bulky foodstuffs that were probably used as tribute inside the small polities. This ceremonial activity might consist only in the ceremonial visits of chiefly emissaries and if they carried something it was probably the very light luxury items that have been associated in this and many areas with long distance trade (Drennan 1984; Gnecco 1996), carried maybe not exactly as tribute but perhaps as a symbol of respect to the sponsoring chief, who probably was on occasion the "official" successor to a dead chief (Drennan 1995). This kind of relationship does not necessarily imply economic centralization. Fig. 7 shows change in number of statues and number of mounds with increased distance from the Mesitas site. A pattern is not very clear, perhaps due to problems with original data—as some sites were intensively looted before research started—but in general it fits the expectations of Steponaitis's model for distribution of investment in monuments in relation to a single regional center. As expected, the larger and more elaborate sites, besides Mesita B, are far away, and the smallest sites are located very close to the center. The main inconsistency in Fig. 4 is that a few sites, such as Lavaderos, Pelota, Tablón, and Guacas, which are at intermediate distances from Mesitas, do have more mounds and/or more statues than other sites. Again we can think of the possible effects slope had on this distribution. For such an evaluation, a map of "cost" (Fig. 6) measuring relative costs of moving from Mesita B through the slope map was used.

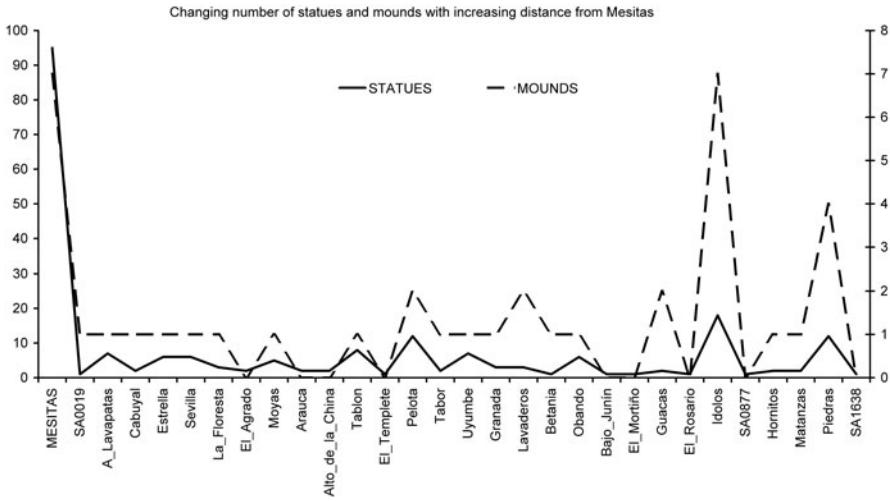

Fig. 7 Change in number of statues and mounds with increased distance from the Mesitas site

This map was used to represent movement costs from the point of view of the Mesitas site. The darkest areas are remote places—the light gray areas are areas with more direct access, in which daily communication was probably easier. In the darker areas communication was more difficult. Figure 8 takes into account such movement cost instead of the linear distances. The overall shape of the distribution does not change much, but now more of the sites featuring more mounds and statues seem similarly apart from the Mesitas site, forming a more clearly distributed pattern, suggesting an underlying ordering for the whole region, in terms of monument investment when cost of moving is considered. Thus, when distance costs are taken into account, the monumental size and elaboration varies according to distance from a regional center, regardless of the smaller size of the proposed tributary polities. Centrality in terms of distance costs might have permitted Mesitas to hold regional centrality in monumentality, even when tribute was collected only from nearby settlements. This could be related to a situation with a ceremonial and religious regional centrality without an economic centrality of Mesitas.

Investment in Monument Building and Sustaining Area

The idea suggested earlier, that centrality in terms of movement costs is related to the amount of monument building in the monumental sites of the Alto Magdalena, regardless of the scale of economic centralization, takes us to questions about the differences between sites. The more neighbors a chiefly center has, the more centrally located it is in the "movement costs" surface and the more participation it will probably receive in terms of tributes for the ceremonial activities carried out at the

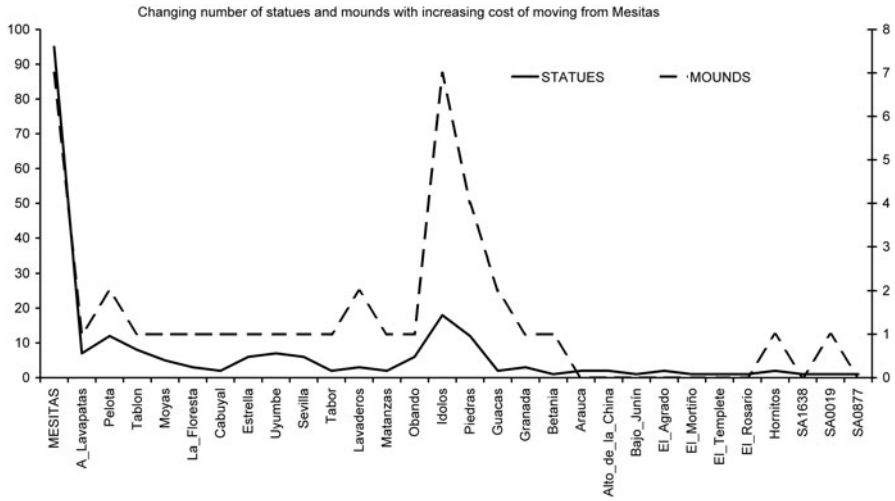

Fig. 8 Changing numbers of statues and mounds in sites ordered by increasing cost of movement from the Mesitas site

center. The regional center would have much more monumental construction, and with distance, each center will have fewer monuments, until after a limit, when given increased costs for transportation, sites will invest more in their own monuments.

Thus, we could argue that movement costs make it easier for centrally located chiefs to organize larger ceremonies and collect more tribute directed to finance ceremonies and monuments. However, the higher number of close neighbors you have, the less sustaining area falls under direct control. In other words, for a chief to maximize the ceremonial importance of his own ceremonial center or monumental site, fragmentation of the territories would be needed, reducing the size of his own territory. This mechanism would increase the ceremonial importance of the site by making it easier to participate, but will actually reduce its productive base. Thus, the highest ranked centers (and individuals) in the ceremonial order of the Alto Magdalena region could also be the poorest ones in terms of sustaining areas.

In order to evaluate the proposition stated above, a Voronoi tesselation was made on the location of known funerary/ceremonial centers in the study area to measure size of territories and test for correlation with number of statues and mounds. The area of every Thiessen polygon directly related with a site was calculated and this variable was compared to the amounts of statues and the amounts of mounds. No correlation was found between area and Number of statues. However, size of the territories does explain some of the variation found in the data. A weak negative correlation was found between distance measured in cost of transportation and number of statues ($n = 43$, $R = 0.28$, $p = 0.07$). The residual of such correlation (in number of statues) shows a stronger, positive correlation with the size of the territories ($n = 43$, $R = 0.60$, $p < 0.005$). Costs involved in going from or to Mesita B relate to an aspect of variation in number of statues, with greatest investment at Mesitas and decreasing number of

statues in neighboring sites with small territories. However, another aspect is related to the size of the territories, with larger territories, located also relatively distant from Mesita B having more statues than would be expected. This pattern might be related to certain political, ceremonial or religious centrality of Mesita B that goes beyond its economic centrality at the level of the small polity. We saw that Mesita B probably did not hold a central tributary control of the region as a whole and that probably, the polities occupying the region were of a similarly small size, but varying in the number of monumental sites. Inside such polities, Steponaitis's model for tribute movement costs affecting the location of centers works better. However, the pattern of differences in monument construction, as related to cost of movement and sustaining areas suggests that Mesita B could have had a ceremonial, social or religious centrality for the whole region exceeding the sizes of tributary polities.

Although it is possible that Mesita B had an economic centrality in the region, the kind of centrality suggested by the data here is not a tributary one but only a political and ceremonial one based on advantageous location.

Limitations and Implications of This Analysis

To fully investigate the patterns of monumental site location it is necessary to extend the analysis to the totality of the region featuring monumental sites. A diachronic analysis is also required to understand the evolutionary significance of the ceremonial centrality of Mesitas and the organization of small economically independent polities proposed here with alternative centers. A good portion of the area considered here has been surveyed by the "Programa de Arqueología Regional en el Alto Magdalena" (Drennan 2000) and the publication of settlement data will soon permit us to compare the findings of this study with the actual distribution of communities. The precision of the geographical location of the sites could be improved. Approximate locations were used for sites that have been heavily looted, and in which some of their monuments have been moved. Finally, there are other problems with the data that could be explored further, as for example the existence of a number of statues inside the local museum in the town of San Agustín whose original locations are still unknown or very imprecise. An ethnographic investigation of the history of discoveries of mounded sites is needed before any additional information about these finds, made by people of the region 40 or 50 years ago, is inevitably lost.

The synchronic spatial analysis presented here is useful in uncovering certain patterns that might help us to understand better the character of the regional organization of the chiefdoms that developed in the Alto Magdalena region. The spatial patterns do suggest that small polities were in a sense economic units, functioning in a tributary economy or other pattern that is consistent with the model offered by Steponaitis (1978). Chiefly elites probably relocated the principal ceremonial center at the ideal geographical location, or close to it, in order to minimize the burden of moving tribute to the center, or perhaps in order to make it easier for people of the region to come to the ceremonial center.

Any tribute involved, however, was minimal, as suggested by the small scale of the monuments. Instead of economic power based on resource control (Gilman 1981) or success in warfare (Carneiro 1981) these patterns suggest a political and economic system with ideological-religious bases that were adjusted in order to minimize the burden on the basic productive sector of society. The nature of the cohesive ties that permitted such a system to exist is not as clear as some of the redistributive models of chiefly organization (Service 1962) expected. Drennan (1995) has shown that there was no clear differentiation in wealth, as reflected in the burial remains, during the Regional Classic period in this region. The only clear expressions of the probable use for tributes are the funerary mounds with stone statues that represent human-animal mythical individuals that probably related deities with high ranked figures (Sotomayor and Uribe 1987; Drennan 1995).

Instead of tribute being collected to balance differences in the productivity of the environment (Service 1962) or to finance warfare and other similar elite activities (Carneiro 1981; Earle 1978), the patterns of mound site distribution suggest that the tribute system was mainly serving the elaboration of ceremonial activities probably directed by the chief. This religious aspect also appears more important in the Alto Magdalena than the economic control of resources by an elite group that some models expect to find in developing chiefdoms (Gilman 1981).

An aspect that needs more attention is the nature of the religious activities. Monuments and the related, usually religious activities are often interpreted as epiphenomena of economic processes (Gilman 1981) and as directly correlated with competition over surplus production (Earle 1978) or even as part of a "homeostatic mechanism" (Peebles and Kus 1977). Religious activity in models of chiefdom development has been considered in relation to economic processes, but it seems necessary to make a distinction between these two diverse aspects of society.

In the case under consideration, the distribution of mound sites and their rankings follow a clear pattern of centrality of Mesitas at the regional level. However, this ceremonial centrality is not directly related with an economic centrality. The economic units were apparently small, and at least two of those polities can be distinguished in the region under study.The religious or ceremonial centrality of Mesitas is not coupled in San Agustín and Alto de los Idolos with economic centrality in the Regional Classic period.

What these patterns point to is that "centrality" often considered the "defining principle of chiefly societies" (Earle 1978), has differing dimensions. The fact that the "poorest" communities—in terms of agricultural land directly associated to them—had also biggest and more complex monument construction contradicts models that might try to explain differences in mound construction in the San Agustín area as reflecting ecological or economical differences. Differences in size and complexity of monuments appear to be related in the Alto Magdalena with the amounts of neighbors a chiefly center had. The smaller the area of every unit, the more neighbors could participate in the ceremonial activities reflected in the mounds. Instead of being based on purely economic principles, this pattern might reflect religious or ceremonial reasons for the efficient distribution of chiefly centers over space. In contradiction with models that see economic bases for chiefdom development (Gilman

1981; Service 1962) and in the absence of evidence for economic exploitation or a specialized redistributive economy, the Alto Magdalena's Regional Classic period is a case in which religious or ceremonial centralization can be considered as playing a more central role in different dimensions of the organization of society.

Further investigation of the changes that these diverse dimensions present in all the pre-Hispanic sequence in the region will permit us to understand better the interrelations between the different "spheres" of chiefly organization.

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Children of the Creeks: Cultural Characterization of Nasa Politics

Wilhelm Londoño

To Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, in memoriam
Today, however, people have not forgotten the birth of the caciques . . .

Joanne Rappaport

Introduction

Foucault's (1999) concept of episteme opened up a prolific debate regarding the ontology of the human sciences; one of the central issues was the appearance of "man" since the eighteenth century "besides scientific objects" (Foucault 1999, p. 334). As such, human beings emerged from the interstices of the space created by three guidelines of modern thought: the science of mathematics and physics; the science of language, life, production, and redistribution of wealth; and the philosophical inquiry developed as a reflection on the "same" (Foucault 1999, p. 337). The union of the former two created a domain of "the mathematizable in linguistics, biology, and economy" while the second and the third created the "philosophy of life, alienated man, and symbolic forms" (Foucault 1999, p. 337). Using these ideas, it is possible to see that archaeological thought has followed two roads, one defined by the union of mathematics and linguistics, biology and economy, and the other created by this latter group along with philosophy. An example of the first epistemic order is the project of the 1970s (e.g., Watson et al. 1974) aimed to generate logical, universal models; an example of the second is the conception of material culture as text (Hodder 1982). Both logics arise from a realm that allows conceiving human affairs from the mathematization of symbols, human physiology, and exchanges; yet, they empty human productions of any specificity and turns culture into a mere epiphenomenon of transcendent orders, represented by formal logical models. A notorious problem of this typological reasoning is that the structure of formal logical

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model emerges from principles of modern rationality by virtue of which the past becomes a reflection of the present. Such is the case of social complexity (cf. Carneiro 1970), a concept stating that control over resources and their redistribution helped to institutionalize hereditary privileges that were at the root of social inequalities and the origin of the state. In this sense, the colonization of the Americas in the sixteenth century and of Africa and Asia in the nineteenth century would be manifestations of a universal logic in which the control over land, means of production, and distribution allowed political prominence. Political hierarchy would be thus inextricably linked to economic processes. I will contrast ethnohistorical and archaeological data to show that the emergence of social differentiation in Tierradentro, a region in southwest Colombia, was not necessarily linked to the control of economic resources. This argument will let me criticize the rapid extrapolation of pre-Hispanic events within regions.

In order to operationalize this argument I will develop an idea suggested by Joanne Rappaport (1981), according to which the social movements at the beginning of the colonial period that took the form of messianic ideologies were possible because its leaders used pre-Hispanic frameworks of meaning. Evidence regarding early colonial Nasa leaders serves to illustrate the social structure underlying activities carried out prior to the Spanish arrival. Archaeological interpretations about Tierradentro posit the existence of episodic leaders exercising ritual functions which translated into political action. In that regard, I want to assess if more recent archaeological evidence mainly relates to poorly centralized polities in which there was little control over economic resources. I will use this evidence to disprove those typologies that set forth the existence of chiefdoms in pre-Hispanic Tierradentro.

Reichel-Dolmatoff's Paradox

Since archaeology became in Colombia a scientific discourse linked to the state, it has been common to state that pre-Hispanic Tierradentro witnessed the development of chiefdom societies. In his synthesis of Colombian archaeology, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1997, p. 179) borrowed Carneiro's (1991) typological definition of chiefdom as "an autonomous political unit comprising several villages or communities under the permanent control of a paramount chief." Following North American neo-evolutionism, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1997, p. 195) stated that it was possible to recognize "remains of ancient chiefdoms" in Tierradentro. In his opinion, the most salient fact of these socio-political formations was the "great vaults" or "underground temples" located in the highest parts of the rugged geography of this part of Colombia.

Reichel-Dolmatoff got to know most regions of Colombia while doing research in the four-fields of anthropology. He observed the most conspicuous features of the belief systems of the societies inhabiting the Eastern lowlands and the Andes. From such a knowledge, he identified cultural continuities between Amazonian iconography and archaeological features from San Agustin, an important site near Tierradentro (Reichel-Dolmatoff 2005). The direct knowledge he had of funerary practices

amongst indigenes from northeast Colombia and of Nasa mythology, enhanced by his readings of scholars such as Horst Nachtigall (1955), allowed him to relate pre-Hispanic cultures with the contemporary indigenous practices. The role of shamans as political leaders arising from intertribal wars and exogamy played a prominent role in his comparative work. Although Reichel-Dolmatoff did not make this evident in his 1965 synthetic book on Colombian archaeology—a mere reproduction of the typological systems of the American school, so popular in those days—he implicitly suspected that American models of chiefdoms did not hold for the local evidence because they linked political leadership to economic activities (either at the level of production or distribution). He thoroughly knew that ethnographic and archaeological data from Andean Colombia (especially from Tierradentro) did not show large centralized spaces, large-scale production systems, or sophisticated redistribution strategies manipulated by specialized individuals. Following Barry Isaac (1982), Reichel-Dolmatoff (1997) stated that the existence of chiefdoms did not mean, necessarily, the existence of large production systems if resources were heavily clustered in certain areas, making it easier to control them.

Anyone who knows the archaeology, history, or ethnography of Tierradentro may suspect that the Nasa communities settled there hardly serve to illustrate political organizations with specialized centers for intensive production and large-scale redistribution. What historical and ethnographic data show is that the Nasa communities control the land, as a means of production, through domestic units. Up until the Spanish arrival, when communal lands were converted into private property, the land was exploited by domestic units that were dispersed but linked by kinship. If the control of economic resources does not grant power, what does it? Reichel-Dolmatoff (1997, p. 182) exquisitely synthesized this problem, his own paradox, positing four questions:

> What was the power of the chiefs based upon? How could they organize such a large workforce to build their civil and religious public projects? Did their power lie in possessing a surplus of food or raw materials or it was about their wealth in gold, their prestige, their almost sacred status? Or perhaps our question does not make any sense because their conception of power was totally different from ours?

Reichel-Dolmatoff knew firsthand that leadership in Andean and Amazonian communities was (and still is) more linked to the control and management of the belief system than to any other aspect. Although he entertained the possibility that pre-Hispanic political leaders actually controlled economic resources, what matters most is that he urged to contextualize with other lines of evidence the possible existence of chiefdom-like sociopolitical formations:

> . . . the desperate search for more and more statues has marked the kind of scientific investigation; the persistence in discovering more grandiose monuments has neglected the study of the social, economic, technological and artistic contexts of the ancient inhabitants. Little is known of their homes, their crops, their pottery and although hundreds of tombs have been opened neither the skeletons nor grave goods are yet to be published. (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1997, p. 190)

What should have been a research question (Gnecco 1996) was assumed as a truth revealed by classifying Tierradentro's pre-Hispanic history through one single trait: large communal, painted tombs, locally known as hipogeos. Although Reichel-Dolmatoff left an explicit research path and although since the 1990s calls have been made to problematize social complexity (Gnecco 1996), systematic investigations have only been carried out in the Upper Magdalena (Drennan 2000); to date nothing is known about the chiefdoms of Tierradentro, if they really existed according to the definition Reichel-Dolmatoff used in his 1965 book. For instance, although social complexity in pre-Hispanic Tierradentro is for some (Dever 1999) beyond doubt, a strong chronology is still lacking that would permit to locate and compare the hipogeos with other indicators of high social inequality, such as distribution centers or control over productive land. Very little has been researched, at least in finding indicators capable of solving Reichel-Dolmatoff's paradox : establishing if resources were centralized and, if they were not, how political power was achieved outside economic factors linked to the acquisition and distribution of resources.

The Hunting of Tama Pieces and Exogamy

The resolution of Reichel-Dolmatoff's paradox was simple: how to prove the existence of Polynesian-style leaders (Sahlins 1958) in Colombia if there was no ethnographic evidence of political leadership based on the control of redistribution or any other economic resource? Although Reichel-Dolmatoff did not delve into the discussion or the empirical implications of Isaac's thesis, such anomalies were soon addressed although not to present unifying solutions but to present the variegated reality of tribal societies.

Gnecco (1996) problematized the concept social complexity in southwest Colombia using the arguments set forth by Feinman and Neitzel (1984) regarding the diversity of pre-state societies. Social complexity is seen from a temporal axis in which a certain kind of sociopolitical organizations gain levels of inequality. Feinman and Neitzel (1984, pp. 48–49), showing cultural diversity within "chiefdoms," discriminated eighteenth functions—such as subsistence, diplomacy, and war—attached to the leaders of South and Central American cultures. Out of 13 groups, only 1 had leaders related to the distribution of goods and only 2 had leaders taking care of storage. The ethnographic figures they provide show that in 55 % of the cases (63 cultures), leaders were obliged to arrange ceremonies.

So far I have made two central inferences: (a) there is plenty of diversity in the archaeological record related to pre-state societies; and (b) in the Americas, leaders were more associated with arranging ceremonies than with regulating economic activities. This latter trend regulated political configurations in pre-Hispanic Tierradentro and it was articulated to a ritual practice, hunting Tama pieces, which was meant to be kinship related; such a relationship was based on Andean precepts encompassed by the signifier of the jaguar and of political leadership, understood as the supernatural acquisition of an individual who, by virtue of this, became a religious leader.

In order to understand the hunting of Tama pieces, it is necessary to focus on the peopling of eastern Colombia. Although the Caguán region, in the eastern foothills of the southwestern Andes, began to be visited since 1530, it was not until the end of the sixteenth century that it became an extractive center. Since 1620, allegations were made about excessive numbers of Tama pieces being taken to the Alto Magdalena and Neiva, with a consequent demographic decline affecting the colonial extractive economy (Pineda 1981, p. 333). The amazing thing about this practice is that, apparently, Tama pieces that were used as slaves by the Spanish turned to be guests in the communities where they were held captive. This was witnessed by two visitors from the early twentieth century, Von Hassel and Whiffen. According to the former (quoted by Pineda 1981, p. 346):

> All tribes have large number of prisoners of war who serve as slaves. These prisoners get often used to their masters, who have removed them from their tribes at an early age, so that they do not differ in any way from the other members of the tribe. I noticed that the treatment given to these slaves is very humanitarian.

According to Whiffen (quoted by Pineda 1981, p. 346):

> Slavery among the Indians is little more than a name in that the slave belongs to the boss (*cacique*) and soon identifies with his family. Even though the slave has a chance to escape it rarely does because it is usually treated with consideration and probably feels as good in the house of his conquerors as in his own.

From these two quotes, the most important one for understanding the political configuration of the late pre-Hispanic period is Whiffen's. To be sure, twentieth century travelers were stricken by confusion: is it possible to treat a war captive so well? Although Pineda (1981) paid little attention to this issue, he nevertheless noted that those travelers were unaware that the captive had entered into a ritual network; he was not forced because, in essence, he was an equal going through certain rites of passage in order to be an integral part of the community, not in any specific role but in the control and reproduction of the belief system.

In spite of what Whiffen noted for the Caquetá and the Putumayo, the hunting of Tama pieces did not only seek to capture slaves for productive activities but was also intended to further the kinship networks of powerful individuals, in this case the caciques ("the slave belongs to the cacique and soon identifies with his family"); however, and this is the point in question, caciques were not necessarily individuals with inherited privileges. As Pineda noted—using an account given by an Andoque after the genocide that occurred at the rubber region of Colombia at the onset of the twentieth century—an individual set to recruit all natives whose communities had been destroyed; he founded a community under his care, forming a political primacy not based on functional aspects. Pineda (1981, p. 348) used a metaphor to illustrate this ritual practice. For the Andoque posoa, the vernacular word for leader, means "the sounded one, who he sounds," and the staff in charge of the "captain" is ihaa, whose translation is "orphan;" that is, the posoa and the ihaa are linked by a figurative kinship, yet the ihaa cannot gain autonomy due to the material elements the leader holds. In short, what the chronicles described as caciques (chiefs) were merely charismatic individuals capable of building groups whose social cohesion was circumstantial.

As Pineda mentioned, the hunting of Tama pieces was also associated with cannibalism. The captives were inverted to be fattened (ritually pregnant) and then eaten (copulated), as with exogamous groups from which women were abducted for reproductive purposes (Pineda 1981, p. 351). Although the sacrifice could have been more symbolic than real, this process allowed to pass from the liminal condition of inverted captive to that of an ally. In this sense, the associations Pineda found amongst the Andoque are relevant; for them businesses are closely related, linguistically speaking, to metaphors of cannibalism in which the jaguar plays a leading role as a predator, that is, as establisher of relations. Two facts, (a) the main colonial cacique of the Nasa, Juan Tama, was a Tama piece, and (b) intertribal wars allowed the creation of communities by adopting "orphans," suggest that Nasa leadership was not based, at least during colonial times, in the control of economic but in religious resources. If Rappaport (1981) is correct, Juan Tama and Francisco Undachi, two messianic leaders, achieved their notorious role by manipulating a pre-Hispanic Andean substratum which combined exogamy with intertribal wars out of which outstanding individuals emerged, such as Juan Tama himself. An important element is that for the Nasa (as much as during colonial times as it is now), the caciques emerge from creeks, indicating a local representation of leadership formation.

In these communities, political prominence was achieved through the mobilization of symbolic resources capable of evoking strong images related to the local worldview. These religious and political leaders enjoyed some power due to their proficiency in symbolic practices requiring skills limited to a few. It is likely that this type of spiritual guides, who led collective activities and mediated disputes, must have come from exogamic relationships, that is, must have emerged from one of the creeks nowadays serving as communication paths. If Polynesian chiefs were characterized by the control they exercised over production, the caciques from Tierradentro were characterized by their knowledge of the universe, especially as with regards to the ancestral knowledge forged in the lowlands. Who was the best representative of this knowledge but a prey caught by Andean jaguars?

Messianic Movements: Undachi and Juan Tama

In 1707, the Spanish dismantled a messianic movement that had formed in the colonial chiefdom of Togoima. The reason for the lack of religious freedom in the area is evident; what is interesting is the configuration of the movement by the messiah Francisco Undachi. According to archival documents found by Rappaport (1981, p. 373), especially a document stating the borders of Togoima in 1727, Undachi started to gather followers in 1706 and built a chapel in the place where a man "with a brown cassock" told him "I am God; build me a church in this place." The individual with the "brown cassock" introduced himself to the messiah as a Nasa-speaking Christian God. Rappaport (1981, p. 374) noted that "The rites celebrated by Undachi, who served as priest or chaplain, were modeled after the Catholic mass and, as a mass, the young participated: '(he) performs the afore mentioned ceremonies and

a child comes down with two or four more throwing lights upon him"'(Rappaport 1981, p. 374). In 1707, Undachi was captured with thirteen of his followers, the chapel he had made in the Alto de la Quebrada de las Cuevas was burned and the objects that were part of the furnishings were confiscated and inventoried. In the first lines of the inventory transcribed by Rappaport (1981, p. 395), we can read that:

> First put on inventory two palmwax candles and half a candle of beeswax; plus a male linen shirt and two cotton undershirts with male inner skirts and a *rattle and necklace of marine snails* with three little bags and inside them three bundles of cotton yarns with others of colored wool; plus two oquitos (?) with their lids and inside them some bracelets of blue beads and two more bracelets of black trinkets and a copper nose ring and a *low-gold necklace*; plus scissors and a pair of black wool boots; plus *four axes*. (italics added)

Besides the spectacular set of artifacts found in Undachi's chapel, it is surprising to know that near the chapel mingas were performed. Mingas are Andean collective works (Rappaport 1981, p. 397) which Gnecco (1996) linked to the building of infrastructure and for which the existence of highly specialized polities is not required. Four groups of artifacts stand out in the set described in the document because of their obvious relationships with archaeological contexts: (a) the necklace of marine snails, suggesting that Undachi and his followers owned some kind of seashell whose meaning could have been related to the cyclical reproduction of the world (See Torres 2000), whereas creeks flow into the ocean and the leaders came from the creeks and disappeared into the lakes; (b) fabrics and the tools to weave them; as Rappaport noted, fabrics are common in other indigenous cultures from Colombia, such as the Kogi, for whom weaving is a ritual activity basic in the enculturation of the young; (c) the axes point to the profound relationship obtaining between those artifacts (designed for production) and rituals; and (d) the low-gold necklace, possibly of tumbaga (a gold and copper alloy), lends support to Rappaport's suggestion that these movements, apparently Catholic, were modeled after local belief systems; their ritual grammar reproduced the mechanisms responsible for the composition of grave goods according to those four sets of artifacts. Other elements, such as quartz, linked to the jaguar's semen (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1988), could have also been part of such an offering. It is worth noting that leaders such as Undachi, without economic importance (that is, lacking political records based on redistribution or on the control of subsistence resources), could have been buried with nonlocal, specialized artifacts. These four sets of artifacts point to the existence of a pre-Hispanic context capable of explaining how grave goods were ultimately composed in SW Colombia—where axes, seashell necklace beads, and tumbaga and gold artifacts were frequent. For that reason, it is important to design technical means for observing the traces left by fabrics in grave goods; this will help to understand the specific characteristics of pre-Hispanic funerary grammars.

Although Rappaport (1981, p. 393) noted, through archival and comparative analysis of other Andean knowledge systems, that messianic movements shared seven recurring structural themes (the end of the world, the rejection of the Spanish, the character and identity of the Messiah, the creator god, the messenger, the Nasa trinity, and the Messiah as god's spokesman) there is no precise relationship between concrete objects and each of these issues. For that reason, it is necessary to design

research strategies that translate mythical benchmarks into archaeological indicators; this would allow interpreting the role of belief systems in shaping the territory, the objects, and the contexts in which they are used, in sum, the archaeological record. Although Undachi is relevant to prove the existence of a material culture substratum recurrent in archaeological contexts, Juan Tama is fundamental in order to explore the specificities of this kind of leaders in terms of the legitimacy of their offices and functions. Juan Tama y Calambás, "son of the star of the Tama creek" (Rappaport 1981, p. 97), was active in Tierradentro between 1700 and 1707. In his name, several Andean cultural outlines are played out. The Tama surname is representative of individuals pulled out of the lowlands by ritual exogamy. The Calambás surname represents, according to the documents, the appropriation of the territories owned by "the afore mentioned Calambás" defeated by Tama. Lastly, the offspring of a star belonging to a stream are related to a Nasa tradition whereby leaders arise from rising streams. According to this mythical plot, the the'walas (shamans) are responsible for rescuing the individuals who will guide the communities through these moments of cultural intensification triggered by nature.

In Juan Tama, we can discern two complementary levels of Nasa political nature. His political prominence sprung from an intercultural context (Rappaport 1981, p. 407). Because he had been uprooted from his original homeland, he was in a position to move about comfortably amidst various cultural contexts; this, in due turn, facilitated his consolidation of Pitayó and Vitoncó, two colonial resguardos (reservations). On the other side, the Calambás surname recreates the ritual war intended to abduct people—which Tama wielded against Calambás. A document that tells that Calambás was defeated by Tama suggests that the former "ruled" over several polities which, given their extension, encompassed different linguistic communities (Rappaport 1981, p. 406). This defeat and the subsequent takeover of populations and territories by Tama tell of polities that were not concomitant with linguistic cultures. These remarks highlight a particularity of Nasa political culture: defeated leaders were banned from summoning commoners for activities such as mingas.

Supernatural descent is linked to the most basic theme in Nasa mythology, that is, the end of the world. According to Nasa historical tradition, leaders such as Tama, Manuela Caramaya, and Llibán ended up in lakes "after saving their people," effectively ending their own cycles. These cultural heroes were also political leaders who behaved in ways that contradicted the natural relationship obtaining between lakes and creeks. The Andes of southwest Colombia harbor valleys filled by alluvial cones. Rivers and creeks flowing from lakes drag these sediments; that is, lakes create streams by overflowing. Cultural heroes are born out of rising waters—typical of the association Nasa philosophy establishes between the flood and the end of the world—and return to the lakes to make them places of worship, contradicting the natural, linear paths of the waters. The logic of disappearance reproduces a conception about water cycles: leaders go down the lakes (by means of creeks) and water "goes up" (by means of seashells left as grave foods). Nasa caciques do not arise from a complex kinship network (that would point to the appropriation of politics by specific groups)

but from sacred moments, when feelings about the end of the world call for a leader who emerges through a dose of charisma and exogamy.

Archaeological Evidence

The assessment of the conceptual models used for interpreting pre-Hispanic societies showed that the social differentiation argued for Tierradentro since the beginning of the twentieth century was untenable (e.g., Gnecco 1996). Yet, archaeological research in the region has basically addressed two issues: (a) the recording and explanation of stylistic similarities and differences with San Agustín (Schottelius 1942; Silva 1943, 1944; Hernández de Alba 1946; Duque 1979; Cháves and Puerta 1980; Sotomayor and Uribe 1987), and (b) the temporal placement of archaeological phenomena (Pérez de Barradas 1937; Nachtigall 1955; Patterson 1965). Only in the 1990s new research paths were tried, following early initiatives, such as establishing adequate chronologies for the temporal placement of archaeological phenomena (Blick 1993). These paths were critical of universal models while favoring historical trajectories. They began to assess hypotheses about social differentiation (Langebaek 1995) pointing to polities that escaped neo-evolutionist typologies: (a) they bore no direct links between public works (such as statues) and demographic centralization, as had already been reported for the Upper Magdalena (cf. Drennan 1994), and (b) they showed dispersed settlement patterns that would have made difficult to control any resource as a means to wield power, something that had been suggested by colonial-time chroniclers (cf. Trimborn 1949). Under these circumstances, archaeology in Tierradentro can opt for reconstructing belief systems showing spatial and temporal continuities and also for determining how cultural imperatives were responsible for funerary practices, trade routes, exchange logics, and political structures; otherwise, frustration will keep mounting before the irrefutable fact that universal models have no local applications. We need an agenda capable of appreciating the cultural specificity of the archaeological record instead of relegating it to be a mere empirical indicator of formal–logical models (the basis of typological thinking); in order to do so, we can feed conceptual developments in the convergence between linguistics, biology, and economy, which, as Foucault (1999) noted, allow to think about symbolic forms. In this sense, a good archaeology work will not be the one turning mathematical the archaeological record—i.e., a phenomenon capable of being represented by mathematical formulations in order to reduce the noise of psychologisms (Foucault 1999, p. 335), the dream of analytic philosophy—but the one appealing to a variety of sources to generate symbolic models attuned to the specificities of material culture. A good archaeological work will not be the one talking about the chemical composition of clays neither about the pathologies of pre-Columbian populations nor about the correlations between resource distribution patterns but the one who uses all these languages of the mathesis to illustrate the logics of the past, their connections with the present, and their future possibilities.

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On Hybrids Recently Unleashed

Cristóbal Gnecco

Bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Amazon Basin to the east, Ecuador to the south and an imaginary line at about the latitude of Bogotá to the north, southwestern (SW) Colombia is a well-defined region whose rationale can be found in history, geography, geopolitics, and economy. Even archaeology has contributed to making it the theater of what it posits to be some of the most important cultural *developments* that the pre-Hispanic history of the country ever witnessed. It has also been the place where the archaeologists have deployed their most colorful analytical weaponry and, therefore, produced some of their most salient hybrids, among which typologies rank high.

As a part of a book intended to criticize and supersede tyrannical thinking, mostly evolutionary, this chapter does not seek to suggest better archaeological typologies but to describe networks of hybrids. I propose to see them through archaeological constructions in one place, southwestern Colombia, and across time, from pre-Hispanic epochs to the present. I propose to see them from the vantage point of the ideas of Bruno Latour (1993), for whom *hybrids* (also known to him as *quasi-objects*) are neither fully natural nor fully social entities but socionatural ones (half object and half subject). Hybrids abound mostly because modernity denies their existence. By establishing a strict separation between Nature and Culture, modernity not only recognizes the enforcement of the divide (what Latour calls *purification*) but also negates the inseparable relationship and continuous co-production between the two (what he calls *mediation*). As a result, the denial of the work of mediation encourages the proliferation of what the relationship between Nature and Culture has ceaselessly created—hybrids:

> Modernity arises first from the conjoined creation of those… entities, and then from the masking of the conjoined birth and the separate treatment of the… communities while, underneath, hybrids continue to multiply as an effect of this separate treatment. (Latour 1993, p. 13)

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This chapter is an attempt to restore, through a work of mediation, the historicity of the many *quasi-objects* the archaeologists have created in this particular region. This is not a work on contextual analysis where I would intend to inscribe archaeological productions (typologies, for example) in the social context that gave them birth. Instead, it will describe, together and at once, both archaeological practice (through its hybrids) and the context in which it occurs. In doing so, the work of archaeologists will appear not as the consequence of contextual necessities (such as nation-building) but as a practice that "invents a science, a context, and a demarcation between the two" (Latour 1993, p. 16).

Latourian Hybrids and Archaeology

Archaeology operates with great numbers of hybrids that are presented as things-in-themselves—machines and artifacts as much as temporal/spatial structuring devices such as phases, types, horizons, and the like. They plague archaeological texts and curricula, yet are simultaneously denied and obliterated. Indeed, archaeologists do not admit that they have a bearing in the creation of what they find and this reluctance is understandable, since such admission would be tantamount to accepting the utter tautology in which the profession is unavoidably trapped.

The history of archaeology is, by all means, a history of an increasing purification of the Nature/Society divide.[1] Archaeologists have, for long, bought the idea that they deal with certain things that pertain to Nature (and only to Nature, without any intervention of Culture). The difference between, say, a scientific archaeologist and one who is not, is the number of natural things they recognize in their treatment with the past. While the former would easily recognize all of them, the latter would qualify the recognition, only accepting a few. The scientific programme that took hold of the discipline in the 1960s and that is still dominant, sought to capture those natural things under laws whose relation to Culture (situational by most accounts and, thus, unaccountable by general principles) has been all but clear. Even though such a programme used the naturalistic conception of Culture, championed by Leslie White by mid-twentieth century, it was never in a position to explain where human agency had gone other than as a consequence of a "methodological" elimination.[2] As a result,

[1] This is equally true for "postmodern" and alternative archaeological accounts, unable to escape the modern tenets on which the discipline is premised, such as the idea that the past is buried and somehow encrypted/codified in things (see Gnecco 2013).

[2] Halfway between naïve and cynical, Leslie White (1959, pp. 240–241) wrote in this regard: "But no one has ever said that culture is an entity that exists and moves by, and of, itself, quite apart from people. Nor has anyone ever said, as far as we know, that the origin, nature, and functions of culture can be understood without taking the human species into consideration... A consideration of the human organism, individually or collectively, is irrelevant to an explanation of processes of culture change. 'This is not mysticism,' says Lowie (1917:66), 'but sound scientific method'... Of course culture does not and could not exist independently of people. But, as we have pointed out earlier, cultural processes can be explained without taking human organisms into account; a consideration of human organisms is irrelevant to the solution of certain problems of culture."

Culture and humans were subjected to Nature and its transcendent entities. Indeed, "nothing more has been done than to discover the Laws of Nature. *The scope of the mobilization is directly proportional to the impossibility of directly conceptualizing its relations with the social order*" (Latour 1993, p 43). Although archaeologists allow themselves to discuss if the typologies (and the types) with which they deal with the past are cultural or natural, that is, created or discovered, Nature reigns in their affairs: they set out to discover the Laws of Nature governing the production of past cultures. In the process, the hybrids that plague archaeology as well as ancestral, non-disciplinary discourses—and whose recognition, by mediation, would have greatly contributed to the understanding of the Culture–Nature relationship— were subdued by purification.

The work of purification in the discipline made a tremendous mistake by treating the past (a part of time inhabited by humans, supposedly bearers of Culture) as if it were part of Nature. By an illogical twist, the bits through which they believe the past is recovered (sherds, hearths, baskets...) are treated as Natural because they are purged of their hybrid character. They are *found*, not *made*. The widespread adoption of technical procedures in archaeology, offered as disciplinary means to achieve representational certainty, have only hardened this Great Divide: Nature (the past) on one side, Culture (archaeology) on the other. For instance, radiocarbon laboratories, assumed to be neutral and independent from any social circumstance, produce chronological data that are taken as unquestionable *evidence*... of ideas which are fairly circumstantial![3] The disciplinary pretension that research procedures have become autonomous by technical means helps to hide that they are linked to a pervasive and powerful cosmology, modernity. It portrays them as just mere technical operations in a cultural vacuum. By doing so, the person who represents (the archaeologist) is banished from the scene of representation and replaced by machines of all sorts.[4] The potential role of mediators— "actors endowed with the capacity to translate what they transport, to redefine it, redeploy it, and also to betray it" (Latour 1993, p. 81)—is thus obliterated by the role of simple intermediaries:

> In the modern perspective, Nature and Society allow explanation because they themselves do not have to be explained. Intermediaries exist, of course, and their role is precisely to

[3] Less than two decades ago, the embarrassing trip of several archaeologists (Meltzer et al. 1994) to testify to the *truth* or *falsity* of the "findings" made at the reputedly very old site of Pedra Furada (Brazil), was an anachronistic iteration of the events described by Shapin and Schaffer (1985) regarding the experiments of Robert Boyle with an air pump, conducted in the seventeenth century, and the scientists/witnesses he enrolled to validate his "findings." Modernity truly repeats itself, sometimes in a farcical mood.

[4] This is an extraordinary paradox (or, better, a simple derision): the archaeologist has been supplanted by machines, one of the many hybrids created by the concerted labor of the sciences. This said, however, machines are not to be feared as if their sole presence would kill our traces of humanity: "How could the *anthropos* be threatened by machines? It has made them, it has put itself into them, it has divided up its own members among their members, it has built its own body with them. How could it be threatened by objects? They have all been quasi-subjects circulating within the collective they traced. It is made of them as much as they are made of it. It has defined itself by multiplying things" (Latour 1993, pp. 137–138). Machines can only be feared if purified as metasocial.

> establish the link between the two, but they establish links only because they themselves lack any ontological status. They merely transport, convey, transfer the power of the only two beings that are real, Nature and Society. (Latour 1993, p. 80)

The autonomization of archaeological representations from the representer (the work of purification championed by the scientific programme) has been finally achieved. The archaeologist has lost any traces of ontological status. At last, the existence of archaeological hybrids has been completely negated. Latour (1993, p. 56) accidentally outlined what archaeologists have learnt to do (an adequate description of professional training): "how to multiply quasi-objects, without accepting them, in order to maintain the Great Divide that separates us both from our past and from other nature-cultures." Even the promising discussions about the metaphysics of typologies, notably those that occurred about types in the USA in the 1940s and 1950s (whose main protagonists were Alex Krieger and James Ford), that tried to recognize the hybrids archaeological practice had created, were soon forgotten. Sophisticated technicalities (themselves hybrids) took over the scene as purified natures or as intermediaries—isotope ratios and spatial analysis, for instance.

But the archaeologists bypass the fact that their objective work with "things" (finding, cataloguing, and exhibiting them) in reality creates them. It creates a non-humanity whose existence is not only crucial for archaeological discourses but to the Western cosmology and the politics of identity as well. Objects, phases, horizons, cultures, and the like are hybrids created by archaeology. Weird as it may seem, these hybrids (whose existence is routinely negated by archaeologists, who treat them only as natural givens) even dictate disciplinary agendas. Meetings and publications, increasingly esoteric, are devoted to deal with these "things" that, from their utter silence, somehow manage to tell disciplinary practitioners where to go and how to find them. As Latour (1993, pp. 21–22) noted:

> We live in communities whose social bond comes from objects fabricated in laboratories; ideas have been replaced by practices, apodeictic reasoning by a controlled doxa, and universal agreement by groups of colleagues. The lovely order that Hobbes was trying to recover is annihilated by the multiplication of private spaces where the transcendental origin of facts is proclaimed—facts that have been fabricated by man yet are no one's handiwork, facts that have no causality yet can be explained.

It is ironical that a whole guild is built around "inert" objects that, in the end, control even its most insignificant steps. This said, let me introduce the hybrids I will be unleashing in this chapter. Let me show continuities, discontinuities, integration, disintegration, homogeneities, and catastrophes. Let me show phases, horizons, and typologies. Let me show what archaeologists do in a remote corner of this wide world.

Continuities and Discontinuities in Northern South America

Behind the cultural areas created by archaeologists breathes a spirit of integration, a world system that is supported by the existence of a transcendent entity: cultural homogeneity, political integration (chiefdom, federation, state, empire), interregional articulations, alliances, networks. The name has changed, along with the analytical

sophistication, but the intent remains transcendent. In the region of the world from where I write, northern South America, the entity that transcends (and links) regional differences is not pre-Hispanic but modern (or better, could have been pre-Hispanic but its exaltation, at the expense of other interpretations, is modern). The idea of well-defined, homogeneous, and continuous cultures was built in Western imagination since the nineteenth century as a defining feature of the nation. Such an idea was projected not only on emergent nations but also on prenational sociopolitical formations. Archaeology, thus, built an image of timeless essential unity of pre-European societies, which brought order and identity to domestic chaos (the national societies being created).

Along with the exaltation of transcendence appeared the fear of meaninglessness that has haunted the archaeologists from the so called Intermediate Area, a peculiar region of northern South America, southern Central America and the Caribbean in which the imperialist integration typical of Mesoamerica and the Central Andes did not occur, although it was home to founding events (such as domestication of plants and metallurgical innovations) without which the events of the "core areas" would hardly have happened. The "Formative" substratum of Intermediate Area societies was as complex as or more complex than the contemporary substratum of the regions where expansionist States eventually emerged. In the "absence" of horizons of political integration, Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff (1987, p. 15) asked "Why the prehistoric peoples of Colombia did not achieve a development similar to that of their neighbors in Mexico and Peru?" and attributed the cause to cultural regionalism, a product of geographical regionalism:

> This extreme physical diversity of the Colombian landscape is, of course, linked in many ways to a pronounced cultural regionalism that has persisted since prehistoric times to the present—an important consideration for the archaeologist who studies the ways in which environmental factors are related to cultural activities. (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1972, p. 11)[5]

So the geography of the country was favorable only, perhaps, to rudimentary polities. Once the colorful wings of environmental determinism were deployed it was just a matter of waiting for someone to fall into its traps. Historian Juan Friede (1953, p. 44) was one of the unwary:

> The high peaks of the Central Cordillera separating the valleys of the Magdalena and the Cauca rivers served as a natural barrier to the habitat of the tribes of the Upper Magdalena to the northwest and the west. These obstacles prevented their expansion.

Once prepared and accepted, the deterministic scenario was no longer a matter of mourning over spilled milk; it was time to see what could be salvaged from the wreck. Without integration, the comparison of traits (for creating traditions and horizons) and, afterwards, chiefdoms gave a hand. If we did not have emperors we at least had

[5] Hermann Trimborn (1949, p. 274) had coined a similar interpretation years ago: "We have known the development of a barbarian *señorío*, equipped with an autocratic power. It was followed, only in a rudimentary and hesitant form, by the stately formation of territorial powers, for which the nature of the country was certainly not appropriate for it did not have those high valleys and extensive plateaus favorable to the formation of large territorial domains."

caciques. Although the proposal of the emergence and spread of chiefdom formations in the area did not imply the existence of integrative horizons (It did not?), it did imply a common level of political organization that would have allowed the circulation of ideas, objects and people, producing some homogeneity. More importantly for the purpose of this book, the widespread adoption of the idea of *chiefdom* (along with its accompanying markers, such as gold work, statuary and the mobilization of labor) resulted in a mad race that delivered the interpretations just born to the dominance of typological tyranny. The archaeologists did not interpret; they looked for what they already knew they would find[6]: *caciques* and the expressions of their power. In their desperate search for markers known beforehand (and regardless of their interaction or temporal occurrence), interpretative avenues were closed shortly after they had been opened! Archaeology became a meaningless (although expensive) game in which tautologies reigned.

After chiefdoms, yet without surpassing them, came inter- and intra-regional articulations (mainly commercial and markedly transverse to the Andean chain) and through them the idea of a symbolic power expressed in the manipulation of prestige goods—subjecting to crossfire the metaphysical scaffolding of *caciques*. The thread that connects this variety of interpretations is the urge to transcend regional differences. This urge eventually became transnational and found fertile ground in the so called "social archaeology." Transverse articulations (that is, articulations between coastal, Andean, and Amazonian regions) became the genie that gave archaeologists the transcendence by integration that they have been longing for decades. In his synthesis of Andean archeology, Luis Guillermo Lumbreras (1981, p. 57) summarized the happy encounter with the genie. A region labeled as "northern Andes" (which includes much of SW Colombia) was characterized as follows:

> A process of intensive contact between all zones is also perceived in all periods; as a result, known material remains show a highly remarkable unity, although large unifying political processes, such as those that occurred in the Central Andes, did not occur here.

The originality of "social archeology," of which Lumbreras was a prophet, was that his attachment to Marxist internationalism became the herald of a kind of previously unknown archaeological Latin Americanism: national archaeologies, relatively isolated, were taken off guard and rendered themselves to the rhetoric of communalities, widely shared horizons, and venerable traditions. Archaeological hybrids, albeit taken as natural beings discovered by painstaking archaeological research and reasoning, were put to serve transnational agendas.

These events that took place in northern South America were replicated, echoed, iterated, in one of its regions.

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[6] Reality stubbornly imitates art. In *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, Jorge Luis Borges offered the following irony long before the advent of the antiscientific programme in archaeology (which, by the way, was quite serious and stern, and not entirely antiscientific): "The director of one of the state prisons told his inmates that there were certain tombs in an ancient river bed and promised freedom to whoever might make an important discovery. During the months preceding the excavation the inmates were shown photographs of what they were to find." Downloaded from http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/0066/borges.pdf

Southwestern Colombia as an Archaeological Theater Full of Hybrids

The birth of Colombian archeology witnessed the "appearance" of isolated archaeological cultures—like they had been waiting to be discovered by the patient work of archaeologists. An atomistic definition was the norm and disciplinary practice was dominated by organizational concerns. Archaeological cultures were taken as self-contained units. José Pérez de Barradas (1954, 1958) was one of the first to break free from that trend and to establish similarities between archaeological cultures, if only in terms of comparison of features. The differences were attenuated by the similarities, largely explained by diffusion.

The existence of a common substrate to many pre-Hispanic cultures, a kind of long-lasting essential homogeneity from which differences later arose, is an old obsession of the archaeologists working in the region. For a long time it was canonical to considering that the Upper Magdalena[7] provided a kind of traditional symbolism that created a shared ideology. The first researcher to provide that interpretation was Konrad Preuss (1974):

> . . . a truly creative spirit, part of a much unified national sentiment, may have left in this region the features of a millennial stay. We can hardly imagine that this people was limited to a territory so small and so it seems certain that the style of the figures so characteristic of this civilization and so easy to recognize will someday appear beyond the Magdalena, in the virgin forests of southern Colombia.

Since then, the archaeologists working in SW Colombia considered San Agustín as the place from where an integrative ideology emanated, a genesis of civilization, if not a de facto occupation:

> I would not doubt that the mask we are studying belongs to the San Agustín culture, of which there are numerous statues and tombs in Tierradentro belonging to its epigonic phase. . . From the above it follows that Tierradentro was settled for some centuries by people from the San Agustín culture. (Pérez de Barradas 1938, p. 4)

This mystic and foundational approach to the statuary from San Agustín is at the origin of a particular statement that would be repeated in other regions of Colombia (also in the Intermediate Area at large): the existence of an inter-regional commonality beyond prominent formal traits (the shape of vessels and tombs, types of decoration) that can be sensed, in a more intangible way, in subtle expressions (the redundancy, albeit with variations, of an iconographic feature, the arrangement of bodies and objects). In short, the existence of a common worldview was proposed. Thus, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1972, p. 138) took up Preuss' idea in a more refined way:

> The important point is the verifiable extension of the idea and not its divergence in detail. . . There are no clear stylistic relationships between these two cultures [Olmec and Chavin] or between any of them and San Agustín, but it is unmistakable that the three share a common thematic core.

[7] The Upper Magdalena is a well-known archaeological area dominated by the overarching presence of so-called *San Agustín culture*, named after the eponymous site, one of the places where Colombian archaeological nationalism has been more conspicuously displayed (see Reichel-Dolmatoff 1972).

The argument went further. Reichel-Dolmatoff (2005) proposed that such a worldview (essential and timeless) was enduring and could even be traced in contemporary mythologies. Warwick Bray (1992, p. 117) echoed this idea:

> In general terms, the first millennium of the Christian era was a time in which the entire SW of Colombia participated in one cultural tradition and technology. . . the different cultures kept separate identities but shared a common worldview.

For Héctor Llanos (1995, p. 130), there was also a common "tradition" in the region:

> . . . the regional cultures that developed from the second millennium BC onwards in the Cauca river valley and the Upper Magdalena belonged to an agricultural and ceramic cultural tradition whose roots can be traced to the Pacific coast of Ecuador.

The "tradition" of Llanos is not a tradition of pots but, as in Reichel and Bray, a symbolic tradition: "It is likely that all these regional cultures belonged to the same symbolic tradition and, therefore, shared a common knowledge" (Llanos 1995, p. 130). A technical variant of this idea, perhaps because their authors were gold work experts, was the "southwestern metallurgical tradition" (Plazas and Falchetti 1983, 1986), which would have included the regions of Tumaco, Nario, Upper Magdalena Tierradentro, Popayán, Calima, and Middle Cauca; would have spread between 2,500 and 1,000 years BP; and would have been characterized by technological, formal, and iconographic similarities in pectorals, beads, tweezers, masks, and diadems.

On this common philosophical background the chiefdom building was erected, an idea (another one) we also owe to Reichel-Dolmatoff;[8] indeed, he assumed that SW Colombia witnessed the emergence and development of complex societies from about 2,000 years ago. The "homogenization" of complexity is mostly based on the idea that social interaction can only occur between polities with the same level of organization. But in SW Colombia the archaeologists did not link cultural homogeneity to adaptation to the same ecosystem (one of the features, and excesses, of the eco-functional paradigm), nor, unlike other areas of the country, to ethnic equivalences.[9] It was simply an expression of what was recovered from the wreckage caused by "finding" the regional differences produced by environmental determinism.

In the late 1970s, the archaeologists began to consider transverse articulations between coastal, Andean and Amazonian polities as responsible for pre-Hispanic commonalities in the region. The political importance of the control over the exchange of goods implicit in such articulations was also considered (e.g., Uribe 1986). It was also suggested that such an exchange occurred at the level of luxury goods, not of basic goods. Processes of articulation were also proposed in the form of political

[8] "These communities [chiefdoms] also appear to have reached a degree of political cohesion and ceremonialism that went beyond the confines of a small region circumscribed by a valley or a river basin. The archaeological record shows that there was some unity in settlement patterns and subsistence activities, in ceramic styles and decorative elements, and also in religious symbolism, as manifested in ceremonial sites and related objects" (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1972, p. 132).

[9] We already know the ontological bog (not to mention the political mess) produced by the equivalence between archaeological cultures and ethnic groups. Such equivalence, once important for the emergence of nation-states, is nowadays a cumbersome guest in the disciplinary banquet, which many want to hide—while, paradoxically, local archaeologies worldwide are pleased to invite over.

models based on the expansion of ideas and the circulation of goods of conspicuous consumption. Several authors (Langebaek 1993; Uribe 1995; Gnecco 1996), myself included, have posited that inter-regional alliances and controlled exchanges were deliberate attempts by regional elites to exclude others from direct participation, justifying their position by referring it to external sources of power. The exchange of goods must have been framed in the "competition for obtaining foreign goods of high value and prestige... in order to justify a special position in society" (Langebaek 1993, p. 31).

Up to here, I have told just a part of the story. Its qualitative unfolding (lots of water had flowed in the analytical river, from comparisons of features and diffusionist explanations to the idea of interelites networks) seemed to ensure the reassuring presence of transcendence. However, this time of a common worldview, of inter-regional articulations, in short, the transcendence of individual differences was abruptly broken in the imagination of the archaeologists by cataclysmic events that they firmly believed to have occurred in SW Colombia some 1,000 years ago. A desired and known world (a mirrored world)—not in vain called Classic by some, holding onto a romantic concept, despite its disciplinary robes—was replaced by a less "developed" one, found by the Spanish in the sixteenth century.[10] The best examples of this extended conception come from the Upper Magdalena[11] (Cuervo 1920, pp. 228–230; Friede 1953, p. 116; Codazzi 1959, p. 420; Caldas 1972, p. 116; Lleras 1995, p. 54). The philosophical, technological, and iconographic homogeneity of pre-Hispanic SW Colombia, a sort of integrative civilization, was breached by invaders who came from the lowlands (always the place of the savages). For example, Pérez de Barradas (1966) suggested that gold work in SW Colombia in the second millennium AD was "invasionist" and was associated with karibs from the Amazonian lowlands. Indeed, Colombian archaeological discourses continuously allude to annihilation, disappearance, and steadiness: archaeological hybrids— societies, cultures, and even sherds—do not change but disappear. The disappearance of pre-Hispanic societies implicit in such a catastrophism (due to invasions and migrations) implies their definite annihilation on time and space and their textual salvation. The "more advanced" pre-Hispanic societies— those with metallurgy, statues, large public works—were eliminated from the historical surface with catastrophic explanations and replaced by "backward" societies, those justly constructed by colonial and Republican discourses about ethnic alterity over the map of Colombia. Not in

[10] Exceptions prove the rule. For Drennan (2000, p. 122) "The continuity of the Regional Classic centralized communities belies not only the idea of a collapse of organization but also the disappearance of the 'sculptor society', as the people of the Regional Classic has sometimes been called." Langebaek (1993, p. 33) has not interpreted discontinuities as changes in population but as reorganizations in the political strategies the elites used for legitimacy.

[11] Individuals so different and so far apart in time as the scientist Caldas (late eighteenth century), the engineer Codazzi (mid-nineteenth century), the traveler Cuervo (late nineteenth century), the historian Friede (mid-twentieth century) and the archaeologist Lleras (late twentieth century) conveyed the same meaning, albeit with different words: the Upper Magdalena was inhabited by a civilized race of sculptors, potters and goldsmiths that was displaced (if not eliminated) by savage Amazonian groups before the Spanish conquest.

vain, invasions are usually tied to a sort of genesis: invading peoples gave to invaded ones the gift of culture (that is, civilization).[12]

This, then, is the other part of the story. How does this heterogeneous scenario articulate with the idea of integration and homogeneity? Well, it does not articulate: they are placed one upon another. Wait! May be they do articulate, after all. Both were functional to the national project, despite their antagonism: the first because the "disappearance" of pre-Hispanic civilizations and its replacement by "invaders" from the lowlands not only consecrated the civilization–savagery dichotomy (civilized Indians in the remote past, integrated into the collective project by a historical gimmick; savage Indians in the present, excluded and marginalized) but also gave legitimacy to two new civilizing genesis, those of the Spanish conquest and modernity (despite that the latter denied the former); and the second because it provided the arguments of a pre-Hispanic civilized homogeneity that was located in the (well-hidden) foundations of the national building and that has served as a rhetorical place from where the national imagination is premised—and even, from where neopopulisms with an ethnic aura are now performed.

If Preuss was right that there was a sort of integrative ideology in pre-Hispanic SW Colombia (distilled and projected from the Upper Magdalena), did it leave any material evidence? The answer depends on how you frame the question. If you frame it from disciplinary purifications (albeit clearly contextual and changing), then you can answer it with a yes or no. It is just a matter of finding (shall I better say forcing?) the right *evidence*. If you frame it from Latourian anthropology, then the answer is that similarities and differences, as well as evidence, are socionatural hybrids, not immanent natural entities that we can recover from *the archaeological record* (another hybrid)—the archaeologists notwithstanding. The production of similarities and differences (that is, their disciplinary upheaval from a sea of disciplinary hybrids) is fully paradigmatic and can be better grasped considering the archaeologist as an intermediary. Such socionatural hybrids, however, have different fates. The marked evolutionary mood of archaeology (despite functionalism)[13] sees discontinuities as exceptional—save when they are politically useful, as in nation-building in Latin America—and continuities as the "natural" condition of history.[14]

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[12] Fortunately for catastrophists, linguists have described a heterogeneous contemporary situation in the region: in the southwestern corner there are Barbacoas groups (Awas), extending to the Central Cordillera (Guambianos); Nasa in the Northeast; Kamsás, Inganos (Quechua speakers) and Cofán in the East and Southeast; and Pastos in the South (González (2000). A huge tower of Babel that can be subjected to different readings. It can mean that so many languages reflect the pre-Hispanic isolation of one group from another—an isolation broken, afterwards, by the *lingua franca* the Spaniards brought to this part of the world. It can also mean that underneath such a linguistic mosaic there were other shared cultural practices. The events of the last four decades in Colombia regarding Indigenous empowerment show that both readings have been favored: despite pan-ethnic alliances, not only based on shared political platforms but on similar symbolic references, most groups maintain (and strengthen) their differences (including their languages).

[13] Although evolutionary philosophy lost centrality in the modern globalization of the late nineteenth century (due to the dismantling of the historical reason by a bourgeoisie increasingly threatened by labor organizations) it never really left its quarters in the metaphysical building of archaeology, not even when the obsession with space silenced, only in appearance, the political value of time.

[14] However, before similarities and differences, interpretative avenues diverge. For example, falling in the side of differences, Drennan (2000, p. 134) noted that "the development of the societies of

But this is not all. There is one more element to be added. Here enters the scene one more hybrid, *development* (formerly known as civilization and progress), the master hybrid that grants a purified existence as well as a direction to so many others. Indeed, the main structuring hybrid in this story is development itself, the most purified of modern nonhumans, so much so that it has replaced the divinity modernity killed and yet managed to maintain in waiting (Latour calls it "crossed-out God"). Development, a transcendent and immanent entity in its own right (with its own laws),[15] coordinates the march and deployment of all the quasi-objects I have mediated in these pages. It establishes the order of which comes first, which comes after, how their articulation is to occur. Above all, it lines them up so they can testify to the passage of time and the directional movement of Culture—the basic premises of modernity and of all the post- phases that follow.

Up to here, my story has unleashed, by mediation, the hybrids that archaeologists have so forcibly denied. My work of mediation has brought them to the fore, describing some of the collectives and networks in which they thrive. It helps breaking the chains of purification that had kept them at bay, in the very dark basement that modernity built to house its most unspeakable creations. They can now run freely.

Unleashed Hybrids

The task of setting hybrids free has no place within an archaeology that is content with its fate; that is content with an unending enforcement of the Nature/Culture divide. It has a place, however, in an archaeology that seeks to counter the reification of disciplinary practice and to destabilize the academic canon, which has thriven alongside the negation of its hybrids. As Arturo Escobar wrote (1998, p. 39) in his book against development "the purpose of the analysis is to help release the discursive field for the task of imagining alternatives can begin." The release of the discursive field starts by thinking historically, denaturalizing the master concepts of the discipline, its more stable metaphysical and ontological core. A task of historicizing archaeological practice is well served by seeing all these hybrids running about, unleashed from their modern chains. Instead of controlling their existence by purification, as modern archaeology did, this paper wants to recognize their being. To begin with, it wants to recognize the paradox of hybrids denied of any agentive existence controlling the lives and careers of the archaeologists trapped and obsessed with finding the very hybrids they create.

This chapter is about restoring the historicity of archaeological practice, patently reified through the last 6 decades. Curious: a practice that was meant to be the history

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the Regional Classic in the Upper Magdalena looks remarkably independent from other regions." Instead, the "southwestern metallurgical tradition" of Plazas and Falchetti (1983, 1986) falls on the side of the similarities.

[15] An extraordinary postmodern paradox, that attests this immanence/transcendence, is the existence of an overarching teleology (that of development and economic growth, modeled in biology) amidst a non-teleological temporality that proudly brandishes presentism and the end of history.

of people ended up being the esoteric story of things-in-themselves, oblivious of the Culture it was supposed to defend so ardently. Yet, it can become (again?) the history of people mediated by the history of socionatural hybrids. But this historicization is not about bringing things to social contexts; it is not about treating them as just discursive objects either: "As soon as we are on the trail of some quasi-object, it appears to us sometimes as a thing, sometimes as a narrative, sometimes as a social bond, without ever being reduced to a mere being" (Latour 1993, p. 89).

This chapter is about acknowledging mediation instead of just accepting purification, that procedure by virtue of which "we believe our duty is to extirpate ourselves from those horrible mixtures as forcibly as possible by no longer confusing what pertains to mere social preoccupations and what pertains to the real nature of things" (Latour 1993, p. 100). It is about describing the networks noted by Latour (1993, p. 121): "Yet there is an Ariadne's thread that would allow us to pass with continuity from the local to the global, from the human to the nonhuman. It is the thread of networks of practice and instruments, of documents and translations." It is about recognizing birth rights—and the importance this simple fact conveys for the rights of the world, people, and nonhumans. It is about hybrids "whose genesis must no longer be clandestine, but must be followed through and through, from the hot events that spawned the objects to the progressive cool-down that transforms them into essences of Nature and Society" (Latour 1993, p. 135). It is about abandoning both Naturalism and Humanism as opposed categories:

> Yet the human, as we now understand, cannot be grasped and saved unless that other part of itself, the share of things, is restored to it. So long as humanism is constructed through contrast with the object that has been abandoned to epistemology, neither the human nor the nonhuman can be understood. (Latour 1993, p. 136)

Not as opposed categories but as inseparable members of the same collectives,[16] Humanism and Naturalism can only be reconstituted if the former embraces and engulfs the nonhumans (hybrids, quasi-objects) it expelled at the point of its inception and the latter embraces and engulfs the humans that were expelled from it by the work of purification. As Latour (1993, p. 139) noted, "Nature and Society are not two distinct poles, but one and the same production of successive states of societies-natures, of collectives. The first guarantee of our new draft thus becomes the nonseparability of quasi-objects, quasi-subjects."

In sum, this chapter is about freedom. For us to be free, "If we want to recover the capacity to sort that appears essential to our morality and defines the human, it is essential that no coherent temporal flow comes to limit our freedom of choice" (Latour 1993, p. 141). That "coherent temporal flow" is what modernity imposed upon us and which archaeology has so diligently served, especially by portraying hybrids as natural givens capable of setting the human course but never as socionatural entities with their own histories and entanglements of cultures and natures. The freedom we have achieved shows, at last, that purification is not a disciplinary inertia

[16] Latour (1993, p. 4) used the word *collectives* "to describe the association of humans and nonhumans," while restricted *society* "to designate one part only of our collectives, the divide invented by the social sciences."

but a deliberate action that serves the intentions of modernity. Historicity, that is, mediation, thus counters the work of purification, the very work that has permitted the operation of typological tyranny in the first place.

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The Role of Place-Making in Chiefdom Societies

Hope Henderson

Introduction

In creating place-related arguments, a wide range of social actors may have reshaped relationships and played out strategic differences. Eric Wolf's concept of structural power (Wolf 1990, 1999) can help investigators conceptualize, compare, and ask new research questions about social relationships during these periods of innovation. Place-making is examined specifically for Muisca societies in Colombia and is also explored for the archaeological site of Suta in the Valley of Leyva, Colombia (1000–1600 AD; Galindo 2012; Henderson and Ostler 2005; Henderson 2008, 2012a; Fajardo 2009; Rodríguez 2010). This case study suggests that while elites at Suta did pursue ritual activities, especially those associated with their houses, that they did not monopolize all ritual practices, particularly those associated with corn beer parties planned by most households. Even so, a small degree of material difference between the elite and nonelite households increased over time, suggesting that structural power arrangements gradually emerged to have a limiting influence within this small chiefdom community. Future research should explore the building residences on the same location and the architectural elements of elite or chiefly residences at Suta and other Muisca settlements to evaluate possible links to emerging status differences, ritual activities, and forms of political control.

We also need additional comparative analysis, especially in chiefdom communities that featured transformations in space and architecture and suggest that ritual and knowledge were a relevant component of political authority. These specific cultural processes contribute to our understanding of the organizational variability documented for nonstate political formations, particularly those that did not transform into much larger and organizationally complex states. I hope that this approach can stimulate and open up more investigation and comparison of political dynamics

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and relationships inside smaller chiefdom societies, especially those with community populations of around 1,000 people, well below the proposed community size threshold of 2,000–2,500 people that is generally associated with more complex chiefdoms organizationally (Feinman 1995, pp. 260–261).

Thinking About Place-Making in Chiefdom Societies

Drawing on a range of theoretical orientations that include phenomenological approaches to landscapes and poststructural analyses of architecture, scholars have argued that neither space nor architecture are neutral constructs and that the creation of place is an intricate cultural practice (Anschuetz et al. 2001; Basso 1996b; Bender 1993; Bradley 1998; Brück 2001, 2005; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Joyce and Gillespie 2000; Hirsh and Hanlon 1995; Ingold 2000; Kus and Raharijaona 2000; Low and Lawrence 2003; Pearson and Richards 1994; Thomas 2001; Tilley 2004).

Place-making is a term that recognizes the many ways in which people attribute meaning to locales. Place-making activities are diverse and can include storytelling, chanting, dancing, praying, ritual offerings, astronomical observations, eating, drinking, naming, dreaming, hunting, fishing, cultivating, or building (Basso 1990, 1996a, b; Hirsh and O'Hanlon 1995; Ingold 2000). Despite a wide-ranging theoretical interest in these topics, the archaeological study of these many diverse activities, especially about those that left no enduring material signature, is problematic. Moreover, the subjective experience of place remains a contested object of study (see Brück 2005).

Thinking about the notion of place has analytic potential for archaeologists curious about change in small-scale chiefdom societies, especially those that featured human settlements with new kinds of architectural forms, spatial organization, and/or monumental architecture, because it allows us to group together and compare these varied phenomena and their material expression. At the same time, we can question their relevance to the societies that built and later, conserved these spatial phenomena and specific locations. This double archaeological perspective contributes to more general anthropological approaches of place-making by rethinking and beginning to compare the locations and the permanence of a variety of architecture that first appeared with the formation of chiefdom polities: (1) special residences, (2) monuments, (3) new architectural forms, (4) different construction techniques and materials, and (5) spatial divisions within settlements (Earle 1987, p. 299, 1997; Feinman and Neitzel 1984; Kolb 1994; Trigger 1990). This study also responds to classic literature on the ceremonial role of political leaders in small-scale polities (Feinman and Neitzel 1984) and contributes to archaeological research that points to the primary importance of ritual activity as a basis for chiefly authority (Bradley 1991, 1998; Drennan 1991, 1995, 2000; Gnecco 1996; González 1998, 2006, 2007; Henderson 2008, 2012a; Henderson and Ostler 2005; Fajardo 2009, 2011; Kolb 1994; Langebaek 1995; Marcus and Flannery 2004; Renfrew 1974, 2001; Rodríguez 2010; Rosenwig 2000; Schachner 2001).

Broadly speaking, a focus on place-making also enables archaeologists to explore the importance of knowledge as a legitimate basis of power and address a theoretical bias that privileges economic forms of political control (Blanton et al. 1996). Finally this study shows how we can address more broadly, political power by drawing from previous studies that conceptualize architecture as a multifaceted concept rather than a unitary symbol and a potentially vital, renewable entity (Bourdieu 2003; Brück 2001, 2005; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Fernández 2003; Helms 1998; Joyce and Gillespie 2000; Kus and Raharijaona 2000; Pearson and Richards 1994). Within this perspective, it is possible to recognize a wider range of relationships involved in creating, maintaining, reproducing, and even abandoning culturally created places (Brück 2001; Dillehay 1990, 2004; McGuire and Paynter 1991).

Thinking About Structural Power Relationships in Chiefdom Societies

Eric Wolf, like other contemporary scholars, criticized the definition of power as the capacity that A, a leader, has to coerce B, all other people, to comply with their orders (McGuire and Paynter 1991) by examining the construction of power as processual, potentially multidirectional, and relative to more than two individual relationships (e.g., elite vs. the nonelite) (Barrett et al. 2001; Henderson 2008, 2012a; Wolf 1999). In *Envisioning Power* (Wolf 1999), he also emphasized the importance of examining both material and ideational factors for understanding the processes and relationships by which people created degrees of strategic advantage and reproduced cultural knowledge (Barrett et al. 2001; Gledhill 2005; Rodseth 2005; Whitehead 2004, p. 183). To some extent, Wolf's thoughts on power are similar to other discussions by archaeologists interested in the highly varied forms of political organization of chiefdom societies and the need to study processes as opposed to categories and unilineal social change (e.g., Blanton et al. 1996; Drennan 1996; Drennan et al. 2010; Feinman 1995; Paynter 1989). Especially pertinent are archaeological investigations that explicitly question social hierarchies and comparative studies into the "horizontal variation" and the wide range of differences between past societies (Drennan and Uribe 1987; Drennan et al. 2010).

Thinking about Wolf's discussion on power relations can help archeologists focus on multiple relationships within past chiefdom societies. I think Wolf's more open and processual notion of power should inspire us to design a research that questions the characteristics and limits of power configurations within and between past social groups. This contextual perspective, by comparing the degrees of difference in a wide range of activities between social groups, especially households, goes beyond studies that focus largely on elites and their degree of direct control over local populations. This broader consideration of power also provides a theoretical alternative to the model of self-interested, entrepreneurial leaders developed by archaeologists; and based on ethnographic research on the New Guinea Big Man that tends to overvalue the impact of single individuals in political processes and long-term social change

(Roscoe 2000). Moreover, in terms of subject matter, Wolf's (1999) detailed analysis of generational differences between Kwakiutl chiefs renders his thinking on power and social change especially appropriate for evaluating the role of place-making in small scale chiefdom communities.

Analyses of place-making, as instances of structural power, address the creation of authority and control as *processes of innovation* in which social relationships and ideas are reshaped and reproduced through time to create a strategic advantage for some and limits for others (Henderson 2008, 2012a). New kinds of activities and political action should appear and begin to limit preexisting fields of action, creating some degree of advantage for emerging leaders or elites. Although Wolf distinguished between four different modalities of power that shaped social relationships, recognizing the balance of power shifted between people, sometimes resulting in power monopolies and efforts to resist them (Wolf 1999, p. 5), his concept of structural power encompassed not only the power differences between people but also the capacity to organize the settings in which these differences are expressed (Wolf 1999, p. 5; Heyman 2003). For example, Wolf identified the creation of "totem poles," as "politicized statements" among Kwakiutl elites beginning in 1873 as an example of how ideas and relationships were reshaped as a result of shifting power coalitions that embraced both traditional and nontraditional sources of chiefly authority, resulting in more "individualized" chiefs (Wolf 1999, pp. 94–95). My approach here develops the notion of structural power to a single category of activities, the creation of innovative architectural and spatial phenomena that co-occurred with the appearance of small-scale chiefly societies, and focuses on the capacity of incipient leaders to act in new ways with regards to preexisting places. This degree of analytic specificity is a response to critiques of structural power as a "reified" concept (Barrett et al. 2001; Whitehead 2004).

This analytic method also follows David's discussion on how to attribute intentionality in the creation of places, which he identifies when existing "sites or monuments are altered to a new purpose" (David 2004, p. 69). He sees intentionality in these periods of modification because "innovation implies choice between a new idea and what came before it." If place-making practices were about creating shifts in the balance of power then several generations of emergent leaders would have built upon and repeatedly modified specific locations using new architectural techniques. Alternatively they could have distanced themselves from preexisting places and constructed new architectural forms in other locations. In either scenario, the capacity to create new arguments and expand fields of action meant that the kinds of places emergent elites reproduced should differ to some degree from those built by earlier place-makers and from the rest of the population.

Broadly speaking, Wolf's notion of structural power is useful for conceptualizing the processes (Brück 2001; Dobres and Robbs 2000, p. 11; Henderson 2008; Kus and Raharijaona 2000; Schachner 2001; Lewis 1993) and "pre-understandings" (David 2004, p. 68) through which new forms of leadership took shape and moves beyond the recognition that incipient elites appropriated as traditional practices to legitimate political inequalities (Joyce 2000; Pauketat 2000; Walker and Lucero 2000). It also

builds upon the theoretical literature as per the limited extent of chiefly power (Feinman and Neitzel 1984, p. 61; Fried 1967, pp. 109–184; Steponaitis 1978; Wright 1984; Wolf 1999, p. 69), in which the community and/or secondary elites had the capacity to reject or depose political leaders in certain circumstances (Feinman and Neitzel 1984, p. 61; Fried 1967, p. 133; Wright 1984, p. 71). Incipient leaders competing for authority and/or control over populations confronted "rules" (Drennan 1995, p. 330) that legitimated social hierarchies. The ability of leaders to alter place-making activities depended upon cultural expertise, knowledge of the rules, and preexisting social relationships. Ambitious personalities (Clark and Blake 1994, p. 18) or "self-emergent organizational abilities" (Adams 2001, p. 358) aside, not all leaders could alter social hierarchies or reshape the rules of authority and create new activities or innovative cultural forms. It also follows that the ability to break cultural rules, understood here as past place-making practices tied to specific locations, may have been a highly successful "competitive strategy" that changed the parameters of political competition and control (Drennan 1995, p. 331) such as the case of more "individualized" coalitions of hereditary chiefs in the late 1800s among the Kwakiutl (Wolf 1999). Thus, the capacity to either (1) appropriate and modify or (2) break away from preexisting cultural rules tied to specific places then reflects a difference in how the balance of power between generations of elites may have shifted to lesser or greater degrees.

Greater degrees of control and coercive leadership may have been associated with an ability to ignore, abandon, or destroy existing places and construct new ones (Smith 2004). In this case, the construction of the first monumental forms in new locations may reflect a deliberate break from past landscapes (Bradley 1998). Bradley (1991, p. 57) has made this argument for chiefly elites from the later Bronze Age (1400–700 BC) in Britain that alternatively destroyed or ignored monuments from earlier periods. In this case, additional evidence of authoritarian leadership has been found in increased marital symbolism, weaponry with combat damage, and some evidence of personal injuries suggestive of combat wounds that co-occurred with other changes such as increased status differentiation (Bradley 1991).

When, on the other hand, political leaders tried to modify place-making they could have tried to relate their authority with specific preexisting locales. By doing so, they created a set of relationships, with people and earlier generations, but possibly also with other kinds of beings, and preexisting ideas. They may have created or modified places to associate their status, authority, or leadership position with a number of different ideas, histories, or relationships: larger social groups, individual capabilities, knowledge of a different time or a historical narrative, the qualities of homologous living structures or universal living things, the qualities of animate life energies, ancestral beings, or powerful animals, and possibly even general life processes or the universe. Their ideas about places, especially those that evoked them as powerful living subjects, could have provided a means to legitimate, coconstruct, and enact new kinds of political relationships, authority, and control that instances of structural power represent. Place-making may also have been a protracted process in which places were continuously composed (1) throughout a single lifetime (Bloch 1995a, 1995b) and (2) sometimes after the decay of a building to focus on a "place

of origin" (McKinnon 2000, pp. 184–187). These leaders could have taken the responsibility for maintaining, renewing, or perpetuating specific places, becoming a necessary component to the cultural reproduction of place (e.g., Henderson and Ostler 2005) and perhaps even an embodiment of place (Bloch 1995b; Munn 2003).

Importantly, Wolf's notion of power also means that we must also consider how other social actors participated and reacted to these changes. Heyman (2003) calls for analyses into how human potential becomes either limited or stimulated due to specific power configurations, encouraging investigators to examine change from various perspectives. His observation is particularly relevant because it recognizes the difficulty of identifying "power" when it is structurally defined (Heyman 2003, p. 142). Scholars have interpreted the creation of monumental works in the early phases of complex societies as evidence of training for more compliant subjects (Trigger 1990, Paynter 1989) or as a collective negotiation in which commoners participated in political movements, unconsciously accepting the new traditions (Pauketat 2000, pp. 115–117) and their long-term domination (Pauketat 2000, p. 123). Others have noted that political domination creates resistance (McGuire and Paynter 1991), suggesting that social actors participated in alternative practices in private domestic contexts. Still others have shown how ritual practices and architectural innovation adopted by one generation were rejected by another, so that not all forms of social change created or enhanced structural differences (Schachner 2001). More broadly, investigators have questioned monumentality as evidence of institutional power (Kolb 1994; Marcus 2003) and some have distinguished between the "power to do" things, like build monuments, and the "power over" subjects (Ames 1995; McGuire and Paynter 1991), finding that political influence was limited and that "nonelites" had a high degree of autonomy to engage in their own initiatives (Berman 1994, 1997; Dillehay 2004; Henderson 1998, 2003, 2012a, b, c; Fajardo 2009, 2011; Rodríguez 2010). We then need to explore shifts in the balance of power by examining place-making initiatives around innovative architectural forms, such as monuments or special residences, and also within households to understand the degree to which emerging chiefs were able to promote certain kinds of cultural expressions and to limit alternative ones, and the degree to which other members of these communities also participated in and perhaps elaborated place-making or other kinds of ritual activities.

Place-Making in Muisca Societies: Place-Related Activities and Chiefly Residences

For archaeologists interested in the symbolic quality of architecture and the construction of places, Muisca residences, especially those of the leaders, are a pertinent object of study. Neither Muisca notions of space nor settlement were well understood by the Colonial-period Spanish during the sixteenth century, but they did recognize chiefly residential compounds enclosed by tall wooden palisades as central places describing them as courts or towns (Broadbent 1964; Pradilla et al. 1995; Rozo

1997; Villate 2001). Residential compounds were square or rectangular and may have spanned nearly 400 m on each side with walls enclosing the entire space as high as 4 m (Villate 2001, p. 92). Inside the compound there were several separate house structures, large patio spaces, and paths that led out of the compound (Villate 2001). Descriptions of the chiefly residential compounds have led some historians to propose that these large and enclosed residential compounds were "the social and symbolic representation of a collective identity" (Correa 2004, p. 289). Based on an analysis of Colonial period Muisca myths, Correa identified the residential compound as the spatial epicenter of ritual activities where political leaders were directly responsible for maintaining annual temporal cycles and a sense of order (Correa 2004, p. 95). There are historic accounts of several different kinds of ritual activities associated with the inauguration and use of chiefly residence (Gamboa 2010, pp. 135–145; Henderson and Ostler 2005; Villate 2001). Other historians see these spaces as a direct source of chiefly authority where military, economic, and religious activities were all concentrated at one place (Villate 2001). During the Colonial period, Spanish authorities even destroyed chiefly residential compounds to punish and indicate that specific Muisca leaders had lost their political standing with Colonial authorities (Gamboa 2010, p. 140) underscoring the relationship between political authority and these spaces. Muisca leaders also called on local labor to contribute to the construction of their residential compounds. Larger settlements could feature numerous enclosed residential compounds from different periods and/or different leaders, some of them subordinate political figures (Villate 2001). There are also references to very old house structures that were recycled as burial places (Villate 2001, p. 150) suggesting that place-making activities were varied but prehaps tied to the persistence of spatial referents such as house location. Excavations of two round structures in the Muisca settlement of Tunja that had a total of 19 tombs beneath the house floor may reflect this kind of place maintenance and recycling (Pradilla et al. 1995, p. 4). Finally, there are a few examples of gold artifacts in the collection of the Museo de Oro of Colombia, of unknown provenance, that seem to depict and represent these architectural compounds (see Henderson and Ostler 2005, Fig. 5) and are suggestive of their particular cultural relevance.

How did the design of chiefly residential compounds and ritual activities contribute to a sense of place among the Muisca? In an earlier article (Henderson and Ostler 2005), I discussed the multiple meanings of Muisca vocabulary related to the house concept, *gue*, that links ideas about bodies, house architecture, whole settlements, kinship relationships, and basic numerical units. These multiple associations based on the same word are suggestive of a particular sense of place and defy traditional conceptual divisions of spatial phenomena by linking architecture to different body parts as well as specific social relationships. Thus the word for house, *gue*, is also used to construct the words meaning (1) stranger (i.e., *gueba* or literally "house-blood"), (2) place or human settlement (i.e., *gueganecana* or "house-crotch-went"), (3) a kind of political or war leader (*guecha* or "house-male"), (4) a standard numerical unit 20 (*gueta* or "house times one"), (5) grandfather (*guexica* or "house-tooth"), and finally, (6) young sacrificial victim (*gueza quyhyca* or "youth mouth"). Parts of the house are also literally associated with parts of the body: the door was a mouth (*gue quyyca*

or "house-mouth"), the central post a bone (*guequyne* or "house-bone"), the space in front of the house a chin or horn (*gue quyhysa* "house-horn-by" or "house-chin-by").

The language of the house, that is Muisca residential architecture, seems to have been similar to other societies where the house stands for a holistic sense of existence (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Helms 1998; Pearson and Richards 1994; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975). Muisca houses and settlements may have been conceived as animate entities that shared a common life cycle and leaders may have nourished their houses and communities so that these places did not rot or decay (see Henderson and Ostler 2005, p. 173). The word for an unpopulated place, *gahachua*, may be the past participle of the word meaning to rot, *gahachansuca* (Henderson and Ostler 2005, p. 173) and also suggest that human settlements had animated qualities.

Additionally, there are eyewitness descriptions of collective Muisca celebrations, in particular, processions on paths leading from the chiefly residential compounds that specifically reflect place-making (Casilimas 2001, p. 31; Correa 2004, pp. 100–101,103–111; Villate 2001). The road or path, *ie*, that lead out of the chiefly residence also had varied meanings: stomach, maintenance, road, smoke, food, dance and/or prayer (Henderson and Ostler 2005, p. 155). The word *iebzasqua* includes the word for path and was translated in Spanish dictionaries to literally mean "make place." The word can be literally translated as "stomach + put," "road + put," "dance + put," "smoke + put," "maintenance + put," "food + put," and/or "prayer + put." The word for road, *ie*, was also combined with numbers to form another word used to call out sequences for dances and prayers (Henderson and Ostler 2005, p. 155) and is suggestive of someone that coordinated processions on these paths. The multiple meaning for the word path and how it is combined with other words to describe the use of this space is highly suggestive that place related activities were part of the design and use of chiefly residential areas. Moreover, several first-person eyewitness accounts of ritual processions are documented only 26 years following the Spanish conquest and seem to match the different linguistic meanings of the Muisca word "path." On the 27th of December, 1563 the chief of Ubaque openly organized and celebrated several days of religious ceremonies, proclaiming these rites as his own funeral celebration (Casilimas and Londoño 2001). This public religious ceremony convoked other indigenous chiefs and one Colonial authority, Juan de Céspedes, the *encomendero* of Ubaque and his family. On the second day of celebrations, the ceremonies were stopped, and a judicial process against the participants was conducted by representatives of the Audiencia Real (Casilimas and Londoño 2001).

The subsequent investigation includes different descriptions of the festivities by participants. They describe a celebration over several days that featured drinking in the interior of the residential compound and dancing and singing along the road in front of the chiefly residential compound. The path in front of the chief's residential compound was the central area of performance with numerous people dancing down the road. Sequential groups of people dressed in masks and hats and other ornaments, playing instruments such as flutes and shells, whistled, cried, danced, sang, and howled down the road; some of them carried flags or emblems made of feathers; some were dressed as "tigers" (Casilimas and Londoño 2001). One participant explained that one person sang and others responded in song (Casilimas and Londoño 2001,

p. 82). Inside the residential compound, participants also gathered and seemed to have drunk corn beer and perhaps ingested halogenic plants that made them vomit. The night before the dance procession, religious figures showed the road gold objects and made offerings of emeralds at three different points of the road.

Another person, dressed in white stood at the end of the road and watched the sun rise and set (Casilimas and Londoño 2001, p. 62). Colonial authorities confiscated a total of 344 objects of personal adornment and instruments used by the participants (Casilimas 2001, pp. 35–36) and reported that between 6,000 and 12,000 people, from a many as 20 different places participated in this particular celebration. In 1666, this same event was recounted by another Colonial historian who suggested the celebration was probably more common and usually timed to coincide with the harvest and new planting of crops and to ask the Sun to preserve the chief (Correa 2004, pp. 106–109).

To date, archaeologists have yet to identify and excavate examples of the large and enclosed residential spaces of the chiefly residential compounds. Excavations in Tunja correspond with Colonial descriptions of the location as a possible religious compound but excavations there did not fully identify all of the different architectural components of this space (Pradilla et al. 1995, p. 6).

Interestingly, these excavations did document two round shaped structures with burials beneath the floor and domestic refuse (Pradilla et al. 1995, p. 6). Future archaeological research must work for methodological advances to aid with the explicit identification and partial excavation of these very large and complex residential spaces, especially the attached paths or roads. The systematic mapping of archaeological sites and the comparison of households within Muisca communities are necessary first steps for documenting the actual functioning and scale of differences that these compounds represented for past societies.

Archaeological Research at Suta, Valley of Leyva

Place-making may have also been one component of political authority at Suta, in the Valley of Leyva, Colombia where political leaders built elite residential areas at the southern end of the site. They also may have contributed to a sense of place by rebuilding some of their residences in the same location, convening people for large gatherings, and expressing status differences and social hierarchy through decorated ceramics (Galindo 2012; Henderson and Ostler 2005; Henderson 2008, 2012a; Fajardo 2009, 2011; Rodríguez 2010). Beyond these activities, elites at Suta did not strongly limit the cultural expression of other households (Henderson 2012a). At Suta, corn beer feasting behavior was a common household phenomenon and a few other households also rebuilt their residences in the same location, suggesting that there was no monopoly over place-making or all ritual activities in this community. The material pattern of a cluster of elite residential houses that was spatially reproduced in time provides context and insight into how these compounds, described in the colonial period, may have originated and developed. This study also highlights an example where the social hierarchy was based on very few activities but was remarkably stable through time (Fajardo 2009, 2011; Henderson 2012a).

Suta was one of the two settlements of roughly equal size from the eleventh through the thirteenth century AD in the Valley of Leyva. Polities focused around single central communities developed throughout the eastern highlands of Colombia, becoming common by the eleventh century AD, so that the settlement history of Suta represents one example of the widespread formation and demise of these organizationally simple polities (Boada 1999, 2000, 2007; Henderson and Ostler 2005; Henderson 2008, 2012a; Kruschek 2003; Langebaek 1995, 2000, 2001). After the thirteenth century AD some polities developed two-tier settlement hierarchies (Langebaek 1995, 2001) but it is still not clear if these polities were highly integrated (Boada 2000; Kruschek 2003) and if such a hierarchy developed in the Valley of Leyva. Spanish conquerors described both multivalley, regionally integrated polities and smaller independent chiefdoms, each composed of single communities, as coexisting across the eastern highlands in the sixteenth century (Broadbent 1964; Correa 2004).

Archaeological research suggests that the social hierarchy among Muisca societies was more oriented towards prestige than wealth differences and that it was not based on the formation of highly integrated regional populations, the control of fertile lands, or the redistribution of staple foods such as maize on the part of political leaders (Boada 2007; Langebaek 1995, 2001). To date, archaeological research in the Eastern highlands of Colombia shows little evidence of wealth differences between households (Boada 2007, Kruschek 2003) or the individual accumulation of wealth in burial contexts (Boada 2000). During the late Muisca period (1200–1600 AD), when regional populations levels increased, competition between leaders and within populations may have increased and extended to some economic activities, such as hunting deer or the manufacture of cloth (Boada 2007). In a comparison of household differences in the Muisca community of Samacá, Boada found that the basis of social hierarchy was fluid and included a mix of prestige and a few wealth-based strategies, suggesting that the interaction and articulation of different activities was more important than any single activity through time (Boada 2007, p. 140).

This analysis is based on a full coverage, systematic intensive survey of Suta covering 33 ha and that reconstructed the internal spatial organization of the settlement from the eleventh century AD up to the sixteenth century (Henderson and Ostler 2005). I documented an informally arranged settlement pattern consisting of (1) randomly spaced distances between 58 residences for the Early Muisca period (1000–1200 AD), (2) evenly spaced distances between 54 residences for the Late Muisca period (1200–1600 AD), (3) spatial discontinuity in 81.5 % of residential locations through time, and (4) the absence of centrally placed, large nonresidential communal spaces. I interpreted these results to mean that political elites at Suta had no direct control over the internal spatial arrangement of whole settlements. Instead, drawing on an analysis of the vocabulary of house and place from the extinct Muisca language and sixteenth-century Spanish descriptions of chiefly palisades and elaborate residential zones, I have proposed (Henderson and Ostler 2005, Henderson 2008, 2012a) that Muisca chiefs at Suta drew upon culturally specific metaphors of place-making (*iebzasqua*) and house (*gue*) to possibly build a large and residential compound with an attached road (*ie*) at the southern end of the settlement. Since

household excavations are in progress, I consider whether the reconstruction of an elite residential zone and an adjacent open space at Suta during the Late Muisca (1200–1600 AD) period over a pre-existing elite residential zone reflects political efforts to reproduce place. I also review preliminary evidence for material differences between centrally located households and households from other portions of the settlement.

During the Early Muisca period, (1000–1200 AD) 80 % of the Valley of Leyva population moved into two different sites, Suta and El Infiernito. Valley population was around 522 people, tripling from the previous period. The remaining 20 % of the population was located in 12 small settlements averaging 1.4 ha in area (Langebaek 2001). Suta was a small settlement consisting of at least 58 residences that were randomly arranged in a 28.7 ha area between two small river banks (Henderson and Ostler 2005). If we take five as an average household size, then the settlement had an estimated population of 290 people for the Early Muisca period, which represented 39 % of the regional population (Langebaek 2001, p. 71). The two largest communities in the Valley of Leyva share some formal features such as their location between two rivers, a dispersed settlement pattern within a 1 km^2 area, and a smaller nucleus of more dense settlement (Langebaek 2001). However, El Infiernito is different from Suta in at least two important ways: it has 42 stone monoliths arranged into two adjacent patios (Silva 1981) and another group of stone monuments that have clearly been moved about the site since the nineteenth century. The relationship between these stone columns, which were dated to before the eleventh century occupation (Silva 1981), and the rest of the settlement is currently disputed (Langebaek 2001).

A relationship between political authority and place-making is plausible for the Early Muisca period (1000–1200 AD) given that a group of residences covering 2 ha at the southern end of the site closely resemble the spatial layout of square-shaped chiefly residential compounds enclosed by wooden palisades described by the Spanish in the sixteenth century as the only distinguishing features in an otherwise dispersed Muisca settlement pattern (Broadbent 1964; Correa 2004; Pradilla et al. 1995; Rozo 1997; Villate 2001). At Suta, I found a continuous spatial distribution of very high ceramic densities which formed a single 2 ha square feature containing 15 separate residential locations and which I interpret as suggestive of this architectural form. The large area of high ceramic densities is also directly over a square-shaped flattened area that may have been modified into a terrace to support the group of residences. This large rectangular-shaped area of high ceramic densities also featured higher proportions of decorated ceramics and some featured polished stone artifacts. Residential locations, excavated and analyzed thus far, indicate that these central households were different from others primarily in two ways. Some household locations, such as Unit 31, featured an unusually high density of ceramic materials, on average five times more than other household locations.

I think the magnitude of difference in ceramic material means that these groups organized extra-household activities such as communal gatherings. These household locations also contained higher proportions of decorated ceramic sherds between 5 % and 12 % of the total domestic assemblage. On average, households from this period only featured 3 % decorated sherds (Fajardo 2009, pp. 99–100). In other respects,

the household artifact assemblages were similar. In fact, the proportion of corn beer jars, cups and special bowls, associated with elite sponsored feasts (Langebaek 1995, p. 37), was more uniform, with a community wide average of.56 % (Fajardo 2009, p. 104) and with centrally located households with similarly low percentages: 0 % in Unit 33, and.63 % in Unit 31, for example. This suggests that a social hierarchy for this first period was based on few activities and material differences.

During the Late Muisca period (1200–1600 AD) the settlement at Suta and the Valley of Leyva changed in several respects. Regional population levels grew by nine fold to between 4,730 and 9,960 people (Langebaek 2001, p. 71). The social community also expanded to within a 10 km radius of Suta, an additional 37 ha of dispersed human settlement appeared. Adding up all the occupation near the central settlement, the entire Suta social community of 48 ha represented 16 % of the regional population, which was a 23 % decrease from the previous period. Suta was one of the five different communities of similar size in the Valley of Leyva during this period (Langebaek 2001), and they were probably the centers of five separate political units. Within Suta, the presence of a second, square feature that partially overlaps the earlier square-shaped residential zone from the Early Muisca period, suggests that political elites reproduced this place by building a similar residential zone composed of several households in the same location, locating it on top of the earlier location and also slightly to the south. Within this large space, two residential locations were rebuilt directly over pre-existing residential locations (Units 33 and 31).

When compared with all other residences built in the same location at Suta during both periods and located throughout the site, systematically placed probe excavations showed that one of these households, Unit 33, featured a high percentage of decorated ceramic sherds during this period (i.e., 8 %). All other households occupied during both periods featured between 0 % and 3 % of decorated sherds with a community-wide average of 3.3 %, suggesting that status differences, as reflected in the percentage of decorated sherds, increased slightly during the second period (Fajardo 2009, pp. 109–111). Moreover, the percentage of decorated ceramic sherds continued to mark differences of status and hierarchy within the expanded settlement of Suta. During this period, there was a linear relationship between the distance from a central household, Unit 31, and percentage of decorated sherds in other residential areas (Rodríguez 2010, pp. 101–103) so that households located farther from the Unit 31, lying in between 600 m and 2,300 m, had an increasingly lower proportion of decorated sherds. Thus, status differences between households correlated with spatial distances from the central residential zone. At Suta, the percentage of decorated sherds is a stable material signature over two time periods of status differences between centrally located households and all other households.

Additionally, household Unit 31 continued to have an unusually high density of ceramic material, 46 % of all the sherds excavated from a sample of eight households occupied during both periods and rebuilt in the same location. This material signature may reflect the capacity of elites from this portion of the site to continue to undertake communal-wide activities during the second period of occupation (Fajardo 2009, Table 9). The continuity in the location of these activities is another stable material

difference between households at Suta and is suggestive of functional continuity in the use of this area of the site. It is the sort of pattern we would expect to find if this elite residential zone was the designated place for the different kinds of activities described for chiefly residential compounds during the sixteenth century. I interpret this data about the rebuilding episodes of specific residences and a larger residential zone at Suta to mean that elites here may have created place-related political arguments to emphasize their connections to a previous generation of elites and preexisting place knowledge. This pattern is relevant because spatial continuity within the settlement was rare with 81.5 % of all residences being rebuilt in different places during the second occupational period. However, it is important to emphasize that this practice, rebuilding, was also undertaken by households outside of the elite residential zone at Suta, and so, elites did not monopolize this activity either. Status differences within this population were proportional rather than categorical and here, place-making had a contributing role in reinforcing and reproducing preexisting status differences between households. This finding complements Boada's (2007) observation that elite strategies at the Muisca settlement of Samacá were largely based on prestige activities but were fluid at the same time, so that the articulation of different activities was more important than any single activity through time.

Finally, the presence of place-making rituals associated with a road or *ie*, attached to the elite residential zone at Suta for both the Early and Late Muisca periods is indirectly suggested by a 2.7 ha area of the site, directly to the south of both square features, that remained open and clear of residential settlement during both periods of occupation. This large and uninhabited space may be the location where place was made; *iebzasque*, as chiefs may have led inhabitants in elaborate processions from the "mouth" of a large, enclosed residential compound, along the belly of the road, making offerings to the Sun god and feeding a "vital" landscape. An alternative explanation, however, for the preservation of a large open space is that it was used for the agricultural production (Henderson and Ostler 2005).

Other changes in the spatial arrangement of Suta suggest that the reproduction of an elite residential zone may not have limited the capacity of other households to engage in place-making activities. An unusual architectural feature, a small and low mound, is present in the northern portion of the site and associated with several residential occupations. This feature may have extended a natural terrace creating an upper flat area of nearly.3 ha upon which several generations of households built their residences. Today, the small mound is about 1 m high. In lieu of more specific contextual information based on excavations of the mound feature, I conclude that during the Late Muisca Period, other elites and/or houses at Suta may have also undertaken place-making activities. This suggests that elites that resided in the residential compound on the south end of the site, while perhaps reinterpreting place-making for political ends, were unable to exclusively control the ideas related to landscapes and place. Finally, the distribution of corn beer jars, cups, and serving bowls, associated with elite-sponsored feast (Langebaek 1995, p. 37), continued to be rather uniform at Suta during the second period of occupation. In the eight households rebuilt in the same location, on average, 57 % of the ceramic assemblage featured these forms (Fajardo 2009, p. 112) and the centrally located households,

Units 31 and 33, only featured.61 % and 0 % of these forms. The highest percentage of these forms was from household unit 22, located outside of the elite residential zone. Among households excavated at four locations far from the original settlement, between 600 m and 2,300 m from Unit 33, the proportion of these forms was similarly uniform (Rodríguez 2010, pp. 98–100), suggesting again, that corn beer feasts were not an elite-sponsored or -controlled activity at Suta during both time periods. Status differences were not expressed through a differential ability to sponsor these activities.

Conclusions

Because leadership and authority were constructed out of preexisting ideas and relationships, some of them in reference to preexisting places, the appearance of monumental forms should be critically investigated as something more than the ability of leaders to finance great energetic expenditures (Trigger 1990), to realize ambitious personalities (Clarke and Blake 1994, p. 18), or to express "self-emergent organizational abilities" (Adams 2001, p. 358). A simplified notion of leadership, especially the ubiquitous Big Man as a self-made, economic entrepreneur (Roscoe 2000), or even the assumption that leadership is based on a universal desire for power on the part of individuals (Taylor 2004), is inadequate for exploring the relevance of these innovations. Instead, we need a broader anthropological exercise that considers the ways in which peoples used ritual to transform locations and architecture. This is a challenge for it defies our own notions of space and secular/sacred distinctions. Although for many archaeologists, spaces may be primarily domestic or public with different degrees of ritual elaboration, these distinctions do not completely capture the human ingenuity present in the process of creating, transforming, and experiencing space (e.g., Basso 1990, 1996a, b; Ingold 2000), creating a classic anthropological problem about naming and comparing complex experiences. Place-making and structural power help us to identify, compare, and debate the material expression of these periods of innovation, especially in small scale chiefdom societies.

Additional analyses of archaeological materials that look to continuity and/or discontinuity in other kinds of cultural activities could help us to fully understand the degree to which these incipient elites deliberately attempted to legitimate themselves as "traditional" leaders with direct links to the past traditions and/or cultural knowledge. Future research could expand to examine changes and continuity in other spatial phenomena such as domestic architecture. Additionally, continuity in other ritual practices, such a funerary activities or feasting, and in other material symbols, especially objects associated with prestige or status differences, could also broaden this kind of reconstruction. If the past, and not just single places, was a strong source of political authority then other kinds of material evidence should reflect the attempts of these new leaders to link themselves to earlier cultural practices. I hope future research can take this broader prospective and analyze a wider range of archaeological evidence to better understand degrees of cultural continuity and discontinuity among such incipient elites in single settlements. Simultaneously, we should also evaluate

if these kinds of leaders maintained or increased their degree of control within these small societies by comparing a representative sample of domestic contexts and a wide range of domestic activities to see if status, prestige, or wealth differences were related to greater restrictive control over peoples' activities.

Future research should follow up on these conclusions and evaluate these relationships in other areas and by examining complementary lines of archaeological evidence. Did leadership strategies that deny or ignore the past emerge out of an earlier conflictive historical context of "group vs. group" raiding and warfare (Flannery and Marcus 2003) as is suggested for San José Mogote in the Valley of Oaxaca, México? Was the ability to break with places, and their cultural associations, a coercive political act analogous to warfare, raiding, or human sacrifice, which enhanced a leader's authority? Smith (2004) proposes a similar argument by discussing how "the destruction of place and the production of forgetting" was a political act designed to reform subjectivity and the relationship between subject and polity (Smith 2004, p. 18). Bradley (1991) also makes a similar point by linking changes in leadership strategies and the abandonment of monuments with increased evidence for warfare and military symbolism. In his review of ethnographic literature in New Guinea, Roscoe (2000) emphasizes the importance of war leaders and skill in ritual and hunting as an important aspect of leadership generally overlooked by archaeologists. He notes that "killing" both humans and animals, was an important aspect of individual prestige (Roscoe 2000, p. 89) and the ability of successful warriors to manage alliances of peace after periods of conflicts (Roscoe 2000, p. 90) were important "coercive" leadership resources (Roscoe 2000, p. 108). He also describes instances of "judiciously despotic men" who achieved leadership status through a measured use of force, one that balanced "intimidation with circumspection" (Roscoe 2000, p. 92). These "judicious despots" might provide a more nuanced analogy of authoritative place-makers, people that expressed force and conflict through ritual. These theoretical possibilities should be further explored and refined in future archaeological studies.

By searching for the answers to all of these kinds of general anthropological questions, archaeologists can invigorate current debates on social change, multiple forms of leadership and degrees of political control, and productively move beyond typological descriptions of past societies. We can also build upon the debates from the 1990s by scholars looking at different chiefdom trajectories who advocated for a broader and more critical appraisal of power and control in these highly varied and small-scale societies (e.g., Drennan 1991). Moreover, this approach is particularly appropriate for analyzing a growing number of chiefdom cases where ritual and/or knowledge is a strong factor in the creation of chiefly authority and where evidence for wealth differences and economic control of basic resources are lacking. Two such examples from Northern South America are the Regional Classic period (1–900 AD) of the Alto Magdalena region and the Early Muisca period (1000–1200 AD) of the Altiplano region of Bogotá in Colombia (Boada 2000, 2007; Drennan 1995, 2000; Fajardo 2009; Gnecco 1996; González 1998, 2006, 2007; Henderson 2008; Henderson and Ostler 2005; Kruschek 2003; Langebaek 1995, 2001).

Another conclusion requiring more work is that other place-making activities co-occurred and possibly multiplied following elite efforts to modify and reproduce places. This possible pattern signals the need for more research into the ways that specific kinds of cultural expression are promoted or hindered by structural power arrangements (Heyman 2003) and leads us to question the notion that peoples that participated in the creation of monumental works and lived in culturally complex places always become, with time, more compliant subjects (Paynter 1989) or unknowing participants in their own domination (Pauketat 2000). Indeed, evidence of concurrent place-making activities would highlight the investigative potential for examining how a range of social actors, and not only emerging elites, appropriated and altered preexisting traditions for political ends (Brück 2001; Dillehay 1990, 2004). At the same time we must be mindful that not all cultural activity is derivative of power arrangements (Ortner 1984, p. 157; Taylor 2004). Problem-focused household-level research is required to better understand the timing and frequency of these ritual activities, degree of autonomy or integration, and the scale of inequality within these societies (e.g., Berman 1994, 1997; Henderson 1998, 2003; Fajardo 2009; Rodríguez 2010). Future household research should creatively apply the concept of structural power (Heyman 2003; Wolf 1990, 1999) to examine these multiple processes and different relationships more systematically. Did the creation of highly symbolic places, accelerate or slow down political competition? Did the modification of traditional practices for political ends, the dismantling of egalitarian controls, open up participation in cultural practices? As places became a way of discussing politics, did more people participate in the creation of new meanings, alternative places, and different relationships? How widely were landscape-related activities transformed to express strategic advantages within small-scale societies?

The analyses and interpretations offered here are designed to stimulate and open up future research into examining social change, the relationship between architectural innovation and place-making, and shifts in the balance of power more critically. Wolf's call to anthropologists to explicitly consider the role of power in cultural expressions, moved us well beyond the neoevolutionary typology of bands, chiefdoms, and states as fixed analytic entities, and continues to productively challenge us to analyze how power, as an aspect of social relationships, is constructed and dynamic (Gledhill 2005; Heyman 2003; Rodseth 2005). The unconsolidated and negotiated quality of chiefly power, a classic aspect of the theoretical literature (Feinman and Neitzel 1984, p. 61; Steponaitis 1978; Wright 1984; Wolf 1999, p. 69), is quite relevant to such discussions so that anthropologists inspired by these highly varied, small, and dynamic political entities (Drennan 1995; Drennan et al. 2010; Earle 1987, 1997; Feinman and Neitzel 1984) are in a position to contribute to contemporary anthropological debates. Expanding beyond the important contributions of energetic studies of monuments in complex societies (Trigger 1990; Kolb 1994), I think Wolf's vision invites us to reexamine the appearance of a wide array of architectural forms and spatial phenomena in chiefdom polities by directly questioning how these cultural innovations were, in fact, an effective source of authority and control, created among small groups of people and reproduced with varying degrees of success in different generations.

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Words, Things and Text: El Infiernito, Archaeology, Documents and Ethnology in the Study of Muisca Society

Carl Henrik Langebaek

Preamble

This article explores two contrasting interpretations of the archaeological sequence in the Colombian Eastern Andes by examining the contributions of archaeological, ethnographical, and ethnohistorical research. These interpretations suggest completely different scenarios for the development of the societies that occupied the Eastern Andes. The first argues for an early and marked emergence of social hierarchy based on the control of the best lands and of the labor force. According to the second, social complexity developed late and to a limited degree and was characterized by low levels of control over land and labor.

In this chapter, I make use of archaeological information to evaluate the two proposals while at the same time offering a reflection on the use of ethnohistorical and ethnographical information in the interpretation of the archaeological record. I do this critically because of the increasing frequency with which these sources are being used in archaeological interpretation, at times with decidedly dubious results and frequently without success integrating them into archaeological research. The concrete subject analyzed here is feasting carried out at El Infiernito (Fig. 1), a settlement in the Leiva Valley occupied from the Herrera Period up until the arrival of the Spanish. The site has been investigated recently by Langebaek (2004) and Salge (2005), following a more extensive regional study (Langebaek 2001).

The Problem

Two regional surveys carried out in Fúquene and in the Leiva Valley coincide in suggesting that hierarchical settlement were only established in the late pre-Spanish period (Langebaek 1995, 2001). In other words, for the period before 1000–1200

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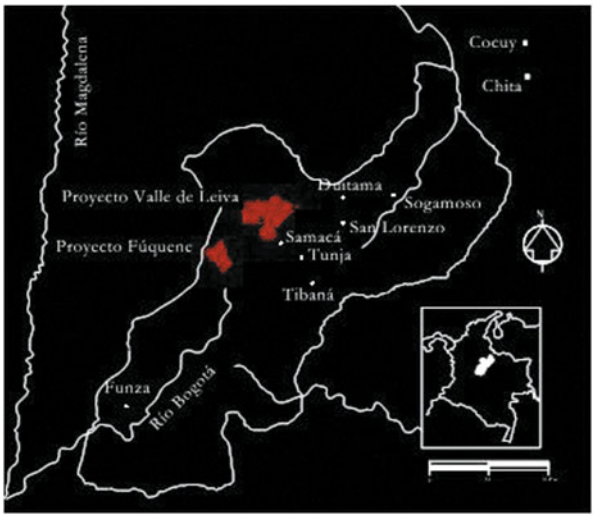

Fig. 1 Location of the projects mentioned in the text (demarcation of regions after Falchetti 1975). Magdalena River, Leiva Valley Project, Fúquene Project, River Bogotá

AD it is not possible to speak for these regions (not necessarily all the Muisca territory) of chiefdoms characterized by the presence of large regional centers from which the elite exercised political and/or economic control. Furthermore, research at Fúquene and Leiva both suggests that control over fertile soils and demographic growth do not offer a satisfactory explanation of the development of Muisca chiefdoms (Langebaek 1995, 2001). These results appear to coincide with the available documentary evidence, which suggests that in the last period before the arrival of the Spanish, the economic control exercised by Muisca chiefs was relative. In fact, the archival evidence demonstrates that political leaders were permanently obliged to negotiate, and were not able to impose their will either politically or economically (Londoño 1984, p. 180; Langebaek 1987a, 1987b; Correa 2004). Recent work argues strongly that neither exchange nor "tribute" appear to have been important to economic domination either in terms of the quantity of goods involved or the inability to institutionalize subordination relations (Langebaek 1985). Information on exchange, for example, has led to the conclusion that the power of the chiefs to influence the domestic economy of the population was limited (Langebaek 1985), a view that would appear to be gaining adepts among authors who have recently argued along similar lines, using very similar language (Henderson and Ostler 2005). Similarly, it has been argued that it is important to explore the ideological aspects of Muisca, chiefly power and to understand it as something in permanent negotiation—an interpretation that highlights the important role that might have been played by feasting (Langebaek 1995).

However, excavations at El Venado in the Samacá Valley have shown that there was differential access to certain objects from the early years of the sequence. Boada (1999, p. 141) has argued that, at least from the early Muisca period, that is, long before 1000 AD the "creation of wealth and labor contributions" constituted the basis of social hierarchy. More specifically, Boada (1998) has suggested that the richest

sector of El Venado was associated with lineages that controlled the best lands and would have been able to concentrate large population groups that reinforced their prestige and power for centuries. This research also emphasizes the role of feasting, though it argues that its main function was to reinforce the appropriation of lands and labor by the elite. Recent research in Funza by Kruschek (2001) also ratifies the idea that there was unequal access to decorated ceramics from early on, also arguing that during the Late Muisca period elite dwellings dominated the most fertile lands.

It is important to acknowledge that the conclusions of the research carried out in El Venado and Funza are not devoid of documentary support. Indeed, the contrast between the findings at Fúquene, the Leiva Valley, and in Funza is also apparent in Spanish written sources. According to the chroniclers, the leadership and the economic, political, and social power of the chiefs was unquestioned by their subjects (Aguado 1956 1, p. 259; Castellanos 1955 4, p. 150; Simón 1981 3, p. 295; Ramos 1972, p. 296).

These interpretations of the nature of power in the Muisca elites illustrate two difficulties. On the one hand, the challenge posed to archaeology, which is obliged to resolve an enormous divergence between the different interpretations of power among the Muisca; on the other the question of how to guarantee the productive employment of information that comes from non-archaeological sources, and to define more adequately the role that these sources may play in the formulation of more robust ideas about the indigenous past. The research presented here insists that the power of Muisca chiefs did not rest on economic control; it does, however, argue that new, more complex explanations are needed to be able to interpret the archaeological record in a way that leads to more persuasive explanations of the archaeological sequence in the Eastern Andes. Ultimately, the research presented here defends the view that the leading role in resolving the problem should be mainly played by archaeology; while it recognizes that ethnohistorical and ethnographic material has a role to play in the formulation of questions and querying the way the archaeological record is interpreted. It also argues that the very nature of written sources makes it impossible for them to provide answers.

The Case of El Infiernito

In order to examine the nature of the societies that developed in the Eastern Andes, a thorough investigation of El Infiernito was carried out, a settlement that existed from the Herrera period until the arrival of the Spanish sited at the confluence of the rivers Leiva and Sutamarchán—one of the driest yet most fertile parts of the Leiva Valley. According to the regional survey, the site was sparsely occupied during the Herrera period between 800 BC and 800 AD, but the population grew during the Early Muisca Period (800–1200 AD), continuing to grow—though less dramatically—during the Late Muisca Period (1200–1600 AD). A remarkable aspect of the archaeological sequence of El Infiernito is that it concentrated nearly a moiety of the population of the Leiva Valley during the Early Muisca Period (the other half concentrated

Fig. 2 The arrangement of monolithic columns in the Eastern Sector of El Infiernito

in one single settlement at Suta), a percentage that would decrease in the following period (Langebaek 2001, 2004). Another characteristic of El Infiernito is the series of monoliths for which the site has been known since the nineteenth century (Fig. 2). In fact, with Tunja, El Infiernito is the only sizeable settlement site in the ancient Muisca territory where columns are found. Some authors have considered them to be Late Muisca (Lleras 1989) while others place them in the Early Muisca Period (Cardale 1987; Boada et al. 1988; Langebaek 2004), or even in the Herrera period, although most likely they continued to be produced and utilized subsequently (Langebaek 2004).

El Infiernito is an ideal site to investigate social inequality among the Muisca. As it concentrated nearly half of the human population during the Early Muisca Period, it has the advantage of representing an interesting regional example. On the other hand, it is located in a valley where regional information exists which makes it possible to place it in context (Langebaek 2001). Finally, the presence of the celebrated group of monoliths provides an opportunity to examine the thorny issue of ideology in a way that other sites do not—or at least not so evidently.

Archaeological Evaluation of the Different Proposals

The first step in evaluating the different theories of archaeologists concerning the control of fertile lands and labor force consists of identifying the distribution of indicators suggesting wealth and celebrations. These indicators have been associated with the functioning of elites both by general specialists in chiefdoms (Earle 1996, p. 1543; Bray 2003) and by those who have concentrated on the Muisca (Langebaek 1995; Boada 1999, Kruschek 2001). This section seeks to analyze the distribution of decorated ceramics and pottery forms associated with feasting—specifically jars and bowls associated with service and consumption—as well as their size, which

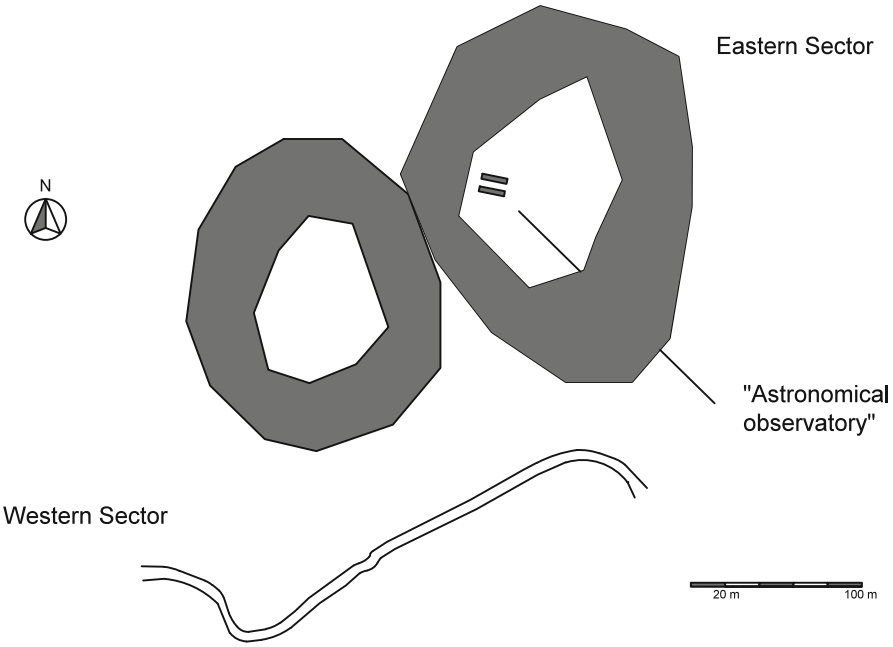

Fig. 3 Location of the ring-shaped concentrations in El Infiernito

functions as an indicator of capacity to attract followers (Blitz 1993; Keuren 2004). The results of this analysis are compared with the distribution of the best lands and the population dynamics observed for the settlement. The main goal is to evaluate if feasting is somehow related with areas where population density was higher or with the most fertile areas within the settlement hypothetically controlled by the elite. The field work strategy comprised an intensive survey of the site similar to the one carried out in the Upper Magdalena Valley (Jaramillo 1995).

Settlement and Celebrations

As a result of the intensive survey of El Infiernito it was possible to identify an area of 0.2 ha that had been continuously occupied during the Herrera Period, followed by an Early Muisca settlement covering 3.52 ha, which grew during the Late Muisca to 6.75 ha. In fact, the distribution of pottery in the settlement identifies two ring-shaped concentrations, one in the east and one in the west, each with an empty space or plaza in the middle that seems to have remained constant throughout the period the site was settled (Fig. 3). Although the matter has not been studied in detail, it appears that similar ring-shaped concentrations exist in other parts of the Eastern Andes, for example among the U'wa communities of the Sierra Nevada del Cocuy (Osborn 1985, p. 92) and it has been mentioned for other archaeological sites, including El Venado (Boada 1999, p. 128).

Table 1 Summary of the comparison between presence of bowls, jars, and decorated ceramics in the eastern sector of El Infiernito compared to the western sector

	Bowls	Jars	Decorated sherds
Herrera	?	?	?
Early Muisca	=	=	+
Late Muisca	=	+	+

There is not enough Herrera pottery to be able to draw conclusions about feasting. In the early and Late Muisca Periods there are few bowls and jars, but enough to draw some conclusions. There is no significant difference between the numbers of bowls between the two periods, but the number of jars does increase during the Late Muisca period (Langebaek 2004). There are few decorated sherds for either period and there is no significant variation between the two (Langebaek 2004). The major difference between the Early and late Muisca periods, then, resides in the jars, which suggest more service activity during the later period. The largest Late Muisca jars are of Suta naranja pulido type, made very close to El Infiernito in Sutamarchán (Falchetti 1975, pp. 122–136). They are jars which, because of their considerable size, would not have been used to transport liquids but to store them in one place, partially buried in the earth (Falchetti 1975, p. 136).

Given that the site is organized around two clearly differentiable ring-shaped areas, it is important to ask for the differences between them. During the Early Period there are no significant differences in the distribution of jars and bowls between the two sectors, but during the Late Muisca this situation changed dramatically; both jars and bowls became much more common in the eastern than in the western sector. Furthermore, the large Suta naranja pulido jars are also concentrated in the east. These results could indicate that in the last pre-Hispanic period the eastern sector was more important in the preparation and serving of *chicha* especially in large vessels apt for the preparation and serving of large quantities. Furthermore, there are significantly more decorated ceramics in the eastern sector, though in this case it is interesting to note that the differentiation initiated in the early Muisca Period (Langebaek 2004). A summary of these findings is provided in Table 1.

This information suggests that in the Late Muisca Period, the majority of the pottery associated with celebrations was concentrated in the eastern sector of El Infiernito. The question is: What does this mean? Traditional interpretations would insist that the archaeological evidence demonstrates the consolidation of elite in the eastern sector that was able to accumulate more prestige goods than the rest of the community. For now, I prefer to leave the issue to one side, passing instead to examine the relation between the between the two contrasting sectors of the site in terms of the distribution of land and changes in patterns of population distribution.

Celebrations and Soils

In El Infiernito the most fertile soils are found in two large areas in the western sector. The first corresponds to the central plaza, and the other is found on the western flank. There are other fertile areas, though much smaller, in the eastern sector. The total area

Table 2 Distribution of human occupation in El Infiernito on the best soils

	Herrera	Early Muisca	Late Muisca
Area (ha)	0.2	3.52	6.75
Percentage variation (%)		1,760	191
Area of best soils (ha)		0.96	1.54
Percentage variation (%)		1,920	160

covered by the most fertile soils is 3.52 ha. During the Herrera Period 0.2 ha of these fertile soils were occupied, rising to 1.54 ha in the Late Muisca Period (Table 2).

In terms of percentage there was considerable continuity in the occupation of the best soils throughout the three pre-Hispanic periods. This is not so surprising given the persistent continuity in the settlement of the two sectors under study. 25 % of the Herrera settlement was built on the most fertile soils compared to 27.3 % of Early Muisca material. The change for the Late Muisca Period is not dramatic, as 22.8 % of the remains were found on the most fertile soils. In other words, the percentage of the settlement in relation to the amount of the most fertile soils increases, but remains stable in terms of percentage.

This information contrasts with the regional surveys where, during the Herrera Period, the population preferred to settle on the most productive soils (Langebaek 1995, 2001). This has been interpreted as the result of first agriculturalists interested in reducing the risks associated with cultivation, choosing to occupy lands that presented fewest impediments to food production (Langebaek and Dever 2000). At the regional level, during the Early Muisca Period there were significant changes in settlement patterns. In the Leiva Valley, many fertile soils were abandoned, although Suta and El Infiernito are both situated in places that were favorable to agriculture (Langebaek 2001, pp. 50–54). In Fúquene, during the same period, there was a sudden change in the pattern of settlement, which shifted to a more intense occupation of some of the least fertile soils (Langebaek 2005). Finally, in the Late Muisca Period in Leiva and in Fúquene alike, the population occupied a wide range of soils, but the settlements themselves are always found on the best land (Langebaek 1995; Langebaek 2005, pp. 54–56).

The selection of the general area of El Infiernito as a place of human settlement makes sense in terms of agricultural productivity. However, the internal distribution of the settlement did not necessarily follow the same logic. There were no important changes in the relationship between the settlement and the distribution of the best soils. From the Herrera Period onwards the population of the western sector built close to the best soils, but the greatest concentration of pottery finds and of painted ceramics associated with celebrations is found in the eastern sector, which has the smallest concentration of the best soils (Langebaek 2004). This finding contradicts the idea that access to the best soils would have been the most important factor in explaining the greater frequency of feasting activities in the eastern sector of El Infiernito.

Feasting and Demography

In terms of demographical dynamics, regional archaeological information indicates a constant increase in population between the Herrera, Early, and Late Muisca Periods both in Fúquene and in the Leiva Valley (Langebaek 1995, 2001). The population dynamics of El Infiernito were calculated having in mind the probable duration of each period (Langebaek 2004). The results suggest a considerable population increase between the Herrera and Early Muisca periods and a less dramatic increase between the Early and Late Muisca periods (Table 3). This, however, does not mean that demographic growth was a determining factor when it came to explaining the differences between the eastern and western sectors of El Infiernito in terms of materials related to feasting.

During the Herrera occupation the population index is slightly higher for the eastern sector than for the western, and the same holds for the two subsequent periods. However, the percentage increases behave differently. In the eastern sector the percentage increase is more marked during the transition between the Herrera and early Muisca, while the rate of increase slows—although only mildly—during the transition between the Early and Late Muisca periods.

It should be noted that in terms of the percentage of jars and decorated sherds the richest sector of the settlement is also the one where the evidence suggests the highest population density throughout the pre-Hispanic period (Tables 4 and 5). This might confirm Boada's view (1999) that the largest and most prestigious families attracted more people to establish themselves nearby.

However, the percentage increase in population during the Late Muisca Period is higher in the western section, which suggests that the differences between the sectors did not imply greater population growth in the area where more, and more intense, feasting was held. In other words, the eastern sector was not marked by higher population growth despite the increasingly important role it was coming to play in feasting. The western sector displayed greater growth than the eastern in the Herrera and Early periods after which the tendency was reversed, precisely at the moment the greater importance of the eastern sector in the organization of feasting was becoming consolidated.

Ethnography and Ethnohistory at El Infiernito

The preceding discussion leads to the conclusion that archaeological research does not support the idea that the power of the indigenous elites was based on their control of fertile lands and the labor force at the site level, which is coherent with information at the regional level at least in Fúquene and Valle de Leiva. The contrasts in the distribution of wealth in the settlement do not appear to be easily explained in terms of either of these factors. In this section, I will concentrate on the abundant ethnohistorical and ethnographic information available on the Muisca. Archaeology is abandoned for a while in order to face a question that seems to be unavoidable:

Table 3 Demographic change in El Infiernito, corrected by duration of period

	Sherds	Years	Area (ha)	Density	Relative index	Correction	Variation (%)	Corrected variation (%)
Colonial-modern	846	350	3.21	263.5	845.8	1,125	39	43.8
Late Muisca	2,134	400	6.75	316	2,133	5	249	124.5
Early Muisca	857	200	3.52	243.5	857	7	7.791	54,537
Herrera	11	1,400	0.2	55	11	1		

Table 4 Population dynamics in the Western Sector of El Infiernito

	Years	Sherds	Area (ha)	Density	Index	Variation (%)	Correction	Variation (%)
Late Muisca	400	1,218	4.22	288.6	1217.9	237	0.5	118.5
Early Muisca	200	514	2.05	250.7	513.9	9,343.6	7	65,405
Herrera	1,400	6	0.132	45.5	6		1	

Table 5 Population dynamics in the Eastern Sector of El Infiernito

	Years	Sherds	Area (ha)	Density	Index	Variation (%)	Correction	Variation (%)
Late Muisca	400	916	2.53	362	915.8	267.4	0.5	133.7
Early Muisca	200	343	1.47	233	342.5	6,863.7	7	48,046
Herrera	1,400	5	0.068	73.5	5.0		1	

How to interpret the spatial organization of El Infiernito and the differences in the distribution of decorated pottery and forms associated with feasting between the two sectors that make up the settlement.

I start by providing basic information about Muisca social organization that might suggest that both sectors correspond to what the Spanish of the sixteenth century called capitanías (Uricoechea 1871 1, p. 127; see also Langebaek 2004), which were grouped in "villages" or chiefdoms (Broadbent 1964; Villamarín and Villamarín 1975; Londoño 1984; Langebaek 1987a). There is abundant evidence that the *capitanías* were residential units. For example, it is frequently mentioned that they were "depopulated" when the Spanish forced the population to live in Spanish-style villages (/1595/ Bombasa AGN C+I f 667r). On other occasions there are references to the removal of capitanes or capitanejos when the Spanish wanted to relocate people (/1586/ Guachetá AGN Vis Boy 17 f 67r). In other cases, when the patterns of Musca settlement were discussed it is common to find that some captains lived "with their subjects" in one place (Busbanzá AGN Vis Boy 17 f?; in Mujica 1946, p. 104). When the Spanish ordered the establishment of villages, they required the captains

and their Indians to settle in "neighborhoods" (barrios) (/1600–2/ Cogua y Nemesa, AGN C+I 20 f 724r; in Broadbent 1964, p. 56).

It is also known that there were different classes of *capitanías* : The documents mention *sybyn* and *uta*, both led by *capitanes* either *utatibas* (captains of the *uta*) or *sybynitas* (captains of the *sybyn*). However, what is not clear is the relationship between these *capitanías*. It has been suggested that both were exogamic units (Villamarín and Villamarín 1975, p. 93). What is intriguing, however, is that while the term *uta* is found in archival documents, and on one occasion, even in the chronicle of Fernández de Piedrahita (1973 1, p. 301) *sybyn* does not appear at all, except in grammars and dictionaries. Rozo (1978) found that the *sybyn* mentioned in the grammars was equivalent to *capitanía mayor* (Uricoechea 1971, p. 127; Acosta 1938, p. 50). The term *uta* appears frequently, associated with concepts that suggest its "inferiority." For example, *ichuta* meant "inferior" or "subaltern" (Acosta 1938, pp. 36, 60); *chuta* translates as "son," "inferior," "subordinate" or "servant," while *chutachune* meant "grandson" (Acosta 1938, p. 33). It is much harder to find the meaning of *sybyn*. Nevertheless, *si* or *sy* translate as "female sexual organ" and the part *ib* or *yb* is very common in concepts related to the "body" and, more specifically, to the "head": *yba* translates as "body," *ibaquin* as "body" or "corpulent;" *ibca* meant "mouth up" (in the sense of on ones back, *bocarriba* in Spanish); *ibsa*, "lip" or "snout;" *ibsaquen* meant "big snouted" or "hairy" (Acosta 1938, p. 36). If, as Acosta assumes, the prefix *chi* was equivalent to *zi*, then *chi* may be translated as "us" or "our" and *si* as "here" (Acosta 1938, p. 39).

If it has been frequently assumed that *sybyns* consisted of groupings of *utas*; then the relationship between both is easy to understand in terms of Spanish culture. However, this solution is not adequate. If a *sybyn* was composed of several *utas* then it is strange that neither of the colonial testimonies mentioned the relationship. Among the many documented disputes concerning whether the Indian labor force belonged to one community or another it is rather inconceivable that there should be no sources indicating that particular *utas* corresponded to a particular community as a result of their belonging to a *sybyn*. This argument is made stronger by the fact that in the archival documents it is common for chiefs to praise their prestige in terms of the communities they "dominated," and because—even long after the conquest—many communities wished to convey a positive take on their prestige and power before the arrival of the Spanish by claiming either independence or relations to some large and prestigious social units. It is therefore strange that no captain should seek to demonstrate his prestige as captain of a *sybyn* or minimize that of a rival by describing him as the mere head of an *uta*.

The terms *capitanía mayor* and *capitanía menor* are too ambiguous to be able to speculate concerning the various different ways they might have related to each other. One interesting possibility is that the *uta* and the *sybyn* belonged to a dual organization. This is not a new idea. Indeed, in the case of the Muisca of the sixteenth century, there is documentary evidence that might confirm this proposal. Eduardo Londoño (1984) identified a possible dual structure in the chieftainship of Tunja at the time the Spanish arrived, in which the chiefs of Tunja and of Ramiriquí both claimed

to be lords of the place. Instead of having recourse to the easiest explanation—that is, that one of the two chiefs was lying—Londoño concluded that there were probably two leaders and two simultaneous "dynasties." The same is true in other chiefdoms for which documentary evidence describes the existence of two chiefs in only one political entity (Londoño 1984, p. 206). For example, it has been proposed that a relationship similar to the one between Tunja and Ramiriquí is found between Suba and Tuna, Duitama and Tobasía, Guatavita and Teusacá, and Bogotá and Chía (Langebaek 1987a, p. 34).

According to Londoño, dualism among the Muisca was not limited to noble dynasties. Recently, Lleras (1996) has extended the observation to Muisca mythology and Correa (2004, p. 63) has even suggested that spatial organization in Muisca society in the Eastern Andes was based on the symbolic opposition between moieties. Lleras (1996) has emphasized that the dual structure of Muisca society appears similar to the situation Ann Osborn describes in the case of the U'wa, a Chibcha speaking community that survives in the Sierra Nevada del Cocuy. The comparison is interesting because Osborn's research is perhaps one of the best examples of an ethnographical study of a functioning dual system—comparable to those that exist for Brazil (Levi-Strauss 1944, 1994; Seeger 1981; Maybury-Lewis 1989; Ewart 2003). In Colombia, information on societies that are divided strictly into two moieties is not abundant, but there is a wealth of material on dualism, both for the extreme south of the country (Gómez 1985, p. 12) and for Chibcha-speaking societies (Reichel Dolmatoff 1950–1). A similar situation has been described for the Chibcha communities in Costa Rica (Guevara 1986). In the cosmology of the Kubaruwa—one of the U'wa groups considered most traditional—the universe was originally made up of two spheres (the permanently above and the permanently below) from whose mixing the intermediate world originated (Osborn 1990, p. 16).

The important point is that the dual structure is reflected in U'wa settlements, each of which is organized into two asymmetrical moieties—an eastern one associated with the rising of the sun and a western one associated with its setting. According to Osborn (1985, pp. 29–30), there are ceremonial houses in the principal central part of the settlement. The eastern and western parts were occupied by different groups and the central part by individuals who enjoyed alliances with people in the two moieties. The social expression of dualism is observable among groups today: The eastern side (*kubina*) is associated not only with the rising sun but also with the above, with the masculine gender (which does not mean that only men live there). The western part (*ruya*), enjoying an association with the setting sun, is female and associated with the underworld below. Each sector is also associated with solstices and equinoxes. The same applies to another group of Chibcha speaking people, the Cuna of Northwestern Colombia and Eastern Panama. According to Herrera (1969, pp. 68–69) the community of Arquía is considered to be divided into two parts (above or *tealed* and below or *nakkwaled*) by an imaginary line running north-south. Nevertheless, in this case there is no exact physical correspondence: It is not so much that there is a division of the terrain but of the people who inhabit each moiety, though each does maintain its particular association with the sun (Herrera 1969, p. 69).

One of the suggestions made by Lleras is that the relationship between *sybyn* and *uta* may be understood in similar terms, i.e., they should be seen as asymmetric moieties each with their own captain (Lleras 1996, p. 109). In other words, the *uta* were comparable to the *ruya* and the *sybyn* to the *kubina*. Lleras does not provide further evidence for his suggestion, but it is possible to find documents that suggest that it has merits. For example, on some occasions in a single chiefdom one chief is described as being from the "the lower part" and another from "the upper part" (Londoño 1984, p. 207). Of course, the terminology for "above" (haut, superiori) and "below" (bas, inferiori) is common in ethnographical descriptions of moieties in South America (Nimuendaju and Lowie 1937, p. 578). Furthermore, certain archival documents make sense if *uta* and *sybyn* were moieties. For example, when in 1594 the organizational structure of the chiefdom of Sisativa was described, it was noted that there were two "principal" captains and "two other captaincies subject to them, and described as *utas* so that in total there are four chiefs" (AGN Vis Boy 17 f 444v; in Langebaek 1987a, p. 27). It is difficult to understand these testimonies if a *sybyn* is made up of *utas*, but easier if a complex relationship is accepted, in which one part of the chiefdom is an *uta* and the other—not necessarily made up of *utas*—constitutes its complementary part.

The idea of making a link between proposals about Muisca social organization and patterns of settlement that have been identified by archaeology is attractive. In El Venado, Boada (1999, pp. 127–128) made the first and important effort in this direction. She considered that there were two options: either that the settlement as a whole should be considered a *sybyn* and each of the sectors that constituted it *utas*; or, that the entire settlement corresponded to an *uta* and that each of its constituent sectors was composed of extended families. Both these options presuppose that a *sybyn* was composed of *utas* (Boada 1999, p. 127). However, if the ideas presented above are correct, then it is possible to interpret El Infiernito in a different light.

First of all it should be remembered that that the captaincies had spatial meaning: The evidence is clear that the *utas* had a territorial equivalence (Londoño 1984). Furthermore, there are indications that *utas* could correspond to small settlements or, as some documents put it, "little villages" (AGN Vis Boy 812v–13r). It is also true that *uta* is at times translated "as the open plaza in front of the house" or "patio" (courtyard) or "plaza" (Uricoechea 1871, p. 127; Acosta 1938, p. 41). However, *uta* has other possible meanings too, or may be associated with other concepts. *Ucta* may be translated as "garden" or "plaza" while *uca* means "below" (Anónimo 1987, p. 166; Acosta 1938, p. 41). *Uctica* translates as "patio" or "cercado" (palisade). In other places "garden" is translated as *ucta* or *ucti* (Anónimo 1987, p. 292). "S/he is walking in the garden" was translated as *uctac asyne*, and although there were other ways of saying it, the phrase includes the prefix *uct* (Anónimo 1987, p. 301). There are, then, three connotations related to possible spatial distributions: plaza, garden and cercado (palisade). There is another, more ambiguous, meaning related to social position: "below," coherent with the distinction that the Spanish made between captains from above and below (Broadbent 1964, p. 34).

Naturally, if *uta* is equivalent to *cercado* or, at least if it is clear that *utas* had cercados, it is evident that they also had a political head even though this might be—as the term *utativa* makes clear—a "minor captain." In this connection interesting

Fig. 4 Gold work representation of a Muisca *cercado* with dual head (Gold Museum, Bogotá; photo by the Gold Museum)

information is provided by some representations of Muisca cercados that occur in their material culture. In Muisca gold work there are representations of a variety of ceremonial and daily activities, including some objects that have been interpreted as cercados (Fig. 4). Frequently, two individuals (chiefs?) are represented within the cercado, or else motifs are presented in symmetrical arrangements.

There is, however, another possibility that does not necessarily exclude the one just presented. If any ethnographic comparison may be established it is with the ring settlements of the Gé, Bororo, and Canella villages of central Brazil, groups that are precisely known for their dual organization (Nimuendaju and Lowie 1937; Heckenberger 1998). The Canella build their huts around a roughly circular plaza about 100 m in diameter (Fig. 5). Around this circular space live two groups: matrilineal, non-totemic, theoretically exogenous, and of equal status. Just as with the moieties among the U'wa, the eastern sector of the settlement (*ka*) is associated with the Sun and the dry season (Nimuendaju and Lowie 1937, p. 570) and the western part is associated with the Moon and the rainy season. During the dry season the western moiety fulfills a subordinate role.

There is, then, a possibility that the two sectors into which El Infiernito is organized corresponded to two *utas*. However, if we speculate that the Muisca displayed dual organization and that therefore, their settlements were divided in moieties, then it

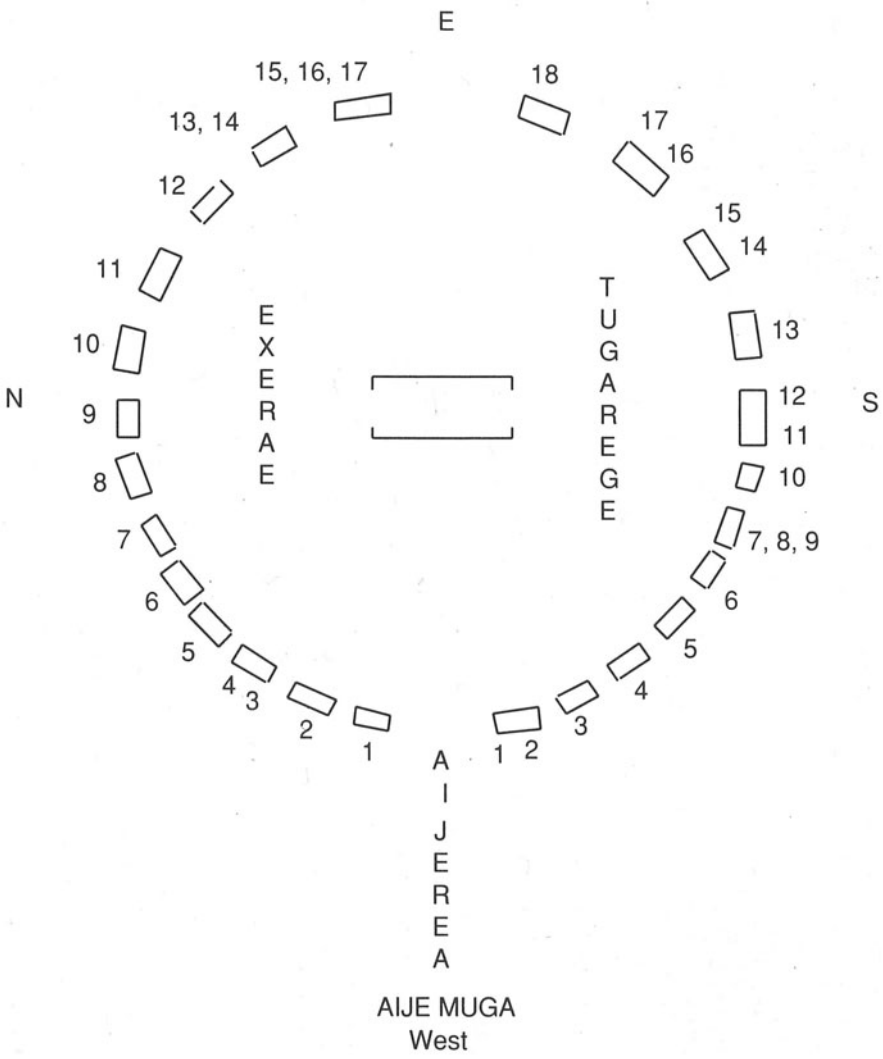

Fig. 5 Bororo village plan, Paiwoe version (after Nimuendaju and Lowie (1937)

could be argued that one moiety of El Infiernito was an *uta* and the other a *sybyn*. In other words, what has been stated about the spatial organization of the *utas* is valid also for the *sybyns*. The consequence, were this to prove true, would be that the settlement was divided into two moieties. In the terms used by the Muisca and recorded in Spanish documents: an *uta* (in the western sector) was on one side, and on the other, to the east, a *sybyn*.

The Nature of the Celebrations: The Sun and Political Leadership

It is important to note that important functions of the U'wa moieties are related to feasting, the most important being the one that takes place in the eastern moiety of the settlement to honor the Sun. Among the Muisca the most popular celebrations were associated with the December solstice. According to the Spanish chronicler Fray Pedro Simón (1981 3, p. 410), these were known as *huan* and were held to remember the creation of the Sun and the Moon. Reichel Dolmatoff (1978) noted that in El Infiernito, during the solstice, the Sun rises over Lake Iguaque, the birth place of the humankind according to Muisca mythology. He also mentions that the structure of columns in the eastern moiety is aligned on an east–west axis (Morales 2004). The December celebrations were associated with several aspects of the dry season. On the one hand, they marked the planting and harvesting of maize (Simón 1981 3, p. 402) while on the other they were associated with the wars that were more common in the dry season months at the end of the Christian year (Zapata 1988, p. 40). According to some chroniclers (Asencio 1921, p. 42), the Muisca associated certain phenomena such as the appearance of comets with hunger and warfare, and it should be also remembered that the best period to make astronomical observations in the Eastern Andes coincides, precisely, with the period of clear skies in December and January.

Documentary sources indicate a close relationship between these celebrations and political leadership. The role of the Sun and the stars in this equation will be dealt with later on, but for now it is important to mention the following: The great ceremonies that the chroniclers believed were for the "payment of tribute"—and that so impressed them as evidence of chiefly power—were in fact celebrations of the December solstice. Simón (1981 3, p. 405) notes that in the celebrations between January and March the chiefs invited each other "alternately," "spending enormous amounts, giving presents of gold, blankets and their wine." Zamora (1980 1, p. 280) also confirms that "the principal and very costly/party/ attended by the kings and leading chiefs was held when they sowed and gathered their seeds." This is confirmed in a good number of archival documents. In Cucunabá the "tribute" was handed over "when the Indians left to carry out farming duties for the chief" (/1594/AGN Vis Cund 4 26v).

For the U'wa and the Cuna the organization in moieties has important implications in the preparation of feasting. Among the U'wa, each of the moieties has its own responsibilities and shamans but the two share important myths and celebrations that govern the relations between them. The *reowas* ("sopladas" or ritual use of blowing of psychoactive substances) seek to purify or cool the subject down; they deal with mortality and disease while the *ayas* or "ordering processes" that are carried out subsequently, and that focus on appearances and the ideal ordering of things, are also associated with the final stage of gestation (Osborn 1990, pp. 16–17). In the *reowas* leadership resides in the eastern moiety; the *ayas* are celebrated by the western moiety although in both cases the two groups collaborate with each other. In the example described by Osborn the moiety with the responsibility to celebrate the *aya* (that is,

the western moiety or *ruya*) is found in the "lower [part] of the nucleus of houses in the village." The celebration of the songs is carried out immediately after the *reowa* songs and after the maize has been harvested for the occasion. Herrera (1969, p. 69) makes a similar observation about the Cuna of Arquía: In his opinion the division into moieties only operated during feasting "as a means of expressing the unity and cohesion of the community that resulted from the reciprocity between the two parts of a complementary pair." In Arquía each man and woman has a complementary pair in the other moiety to which they are required to serve *chicha*.

Might a relationship be suggested between the eastern sector of El Infiernito and the ceremonies associated with the Sun and with indigenous leadership? The author of *El Epítome* (Ramos 1972, p. 299) argued that the Muisca worshipped the Sun and the Moon as gods. But according to Rozo (1999) the solar myths came to be more important than their lunar counterparts. Correa (2004) argues that the origins of the Muisca social order in the sixteenth century were based on a political ordering whereby power was represented as the inheritor or incarnation of the Sun. Indeed, some chronicles establish a direct connection between solar celebrations and political leadership and the Muisca grammars find that Bochica is the equivalent of the "God of the cercados" but also "the God of the chiefs and captains" (Simón 1981 3, p. 277), or "special patron saint of the chiefs" (Acosta 1938, p. 31). Some grammars strengthen the idea that that political leadership among the Muisca might have been based on a growing association between the chief and the Sun. The word *hue*, for example, is translated as "lord" (seor) but also as "son of the Sun" and it may be connected to the name *huan* that, according to Brother Pedro Simón, the Muisca gave to the celebrations of the December solstice (Acosta 1938, p. 37).

Bochica's identity makes it possible to make this connection. As Correa (2004) argues, Bochica represents the Muisca "civilizing" God, the incarnation of the Sun but, at the same, the creator of order among the people, of occupations, norms and agriculture, as well as controller of the elements of nature. The Spanish friar Juan de Castellanos (1955 4, p. 157) states that Bochica could also be called *Xue*, that is *Sue*, or "Sun." There are references that support the idea that the chiefs were identified with certain of Bochica's qualities. When he died in Sogamoso, Bochica ". . . left to the chief as inheritor/his great saintliness and power" (Castellanos 1955 4, p. 158). Castellanos also confirms (1955 4, p. 159) that the chief of Sogamoso was able to predict the weather, just as it was believed Bochica could. In some Muisca myths the chief Goranchacha was considered to be the son of the Sun and of a woman from Guachetá (Simón 1981 3, p. 418). Furthermore, in a document the chief of Ubaque who organized the December solstice celebrations there specifically recognized that they were held in Bochica's honor (Casilimas 2001, p. 40).

There is additional information that reinforces the importance of the solar cult, and that might indicate an interesting relationship between El Infiernito and the arrangement of columns found at Tunja. Brother Pedro Simón (1981 3, p. 422) says that Goranchacha ordered a "palace" to be built using "strong and noble marble" brought from far away. The arrival of the Spanish interrupted the work, but remains of the stones were abandoned in Ramiriquí and Monquirá, in the Leiva Valley. The interesting aspect of this story is that Tunja and El Infiernito are two places where

Muisca monoliths are associated with places of human habitation. In other words, this is not a case of isolated monoliths such as those that are found in Ramiriquí and in various other places in the Eastern Andes but of structures that formed a part of settlements that were occupied for hundreds of years, in both cases at least since the Herrera period.

On the other hand, it is important to indicate the close relationship between the paraphernalia of feasting, the symbolism of the Sun, and the east. In this sense it should be remembered that the arrangement of monoliths used to follow the movements of the Sun is found in the eastern sector of El Infiernito. Osborn reports that among the U'wa the eastern moiety of the settlement is associated with the birth of the Sun, and it is the population of that sector that is charged with organizing the festivities associated with it. It is also the case that the malocas of the Amazon are frequently oriented in relation to the movement of the Sun. Usually, the eastern sector is associated with masculine activities and the Sun; it is also common for the sector to be associated with ceremonial activities (Correa 2004).

Other aspects reinforce the idea of a close relationship between feasting and the birth of the Sun. This is the case of the sacrifices that some chroniclers maintain were made to nourish the Sun during the celebrations (Rozo 1997b, p. 108). In fact the conquistadores described how the sacrificial children (*mojas*) were acquired in the eastern piedmont where they had previously been trained in a place known as the "House of the Sun" (Langebaek 1987a, p. 105). The author of *El Epítome* wrote that the *mojas* "understand the Sun and speak with it and receive answers" (see Ramos 1972, p. 299). Fernández de Oviedo is even more explicit in indicating the relationship between political power, the *mojas*, and the Sun. In his words, "the chiefs, or at least the principal ones, are never seen without these *mojas*," to such a degree that when one was sacrificed another was immediately sent for. The *mojas* were brought. . . from a province where, they say, they speak with the sun, and they bring these children who are at most 5 or 6 years old as hostages. And they bring them with their navels cut because they say that in that land when they speak with the sun he tells them to cut them where they have been born because the blood that flows from them when they are cut around the navel is drunk by the sun (Fernández de Oviedo 1959 3, p. 121).

However, the *mojas* were not the only ones. Many of the decorations associated with the celebrations are related to the Sun: gold above all, but also tropical birds and their feathers, which are described as an important part of feasting. According to some chroniclers the Muisca also had the custom of sacrificing birds which—like the *mojas*—were brought from the piedmont where the Andes meet the eastern plains (Zamora 1980 1, p. 279). Alonso de Medrano (1992, p. 71) notes that colored feathers "formed a large part of their idolatry and superstitions." In effect, the sanctuaries were often described as *plumerías* (masses of feathers) or *Iglesias de plumerías* (AGN C+1 16 564r and ff.). Notably, as Rozo points out (1997a, p. 38), the word *sue* was used to signify both "bird" and "sun."

Celebrations, Chiefs, and Cercados

Another important aspect that is useful in evaluating the role of the feasting and the nature of Muisca power is that the celebrations took place within the *cercado* of the chiefs. In a document dealing with the celebrations organized by the chief of Ubaque it is apparent that the dances were performed "in the roadway in front of the door in the chief's *cercado*" (Casilimas 2001, p. 40). Many of the exchange ceremonies described among the Muisca (Langebaek 1987a) occurred within the area delineated by *cercados.* It is therefore important to understand the significance of these structures. The documents insist that the indigenous had to build the chief's "house" or "*cercado*" for the December solstice celebrations. This is important information as it suggests that the structures had symbolic value. It is likely that they served as astronomical observatories. In the Muisca grammars *gueta* is frequently translated as "twenty" but also as "casa de campo" (Lugo 1616; Acosta 1938). Twenty was an important number as the Muisca "year" was made up of 20 moons (Uricoechea 1971, p. 54). And when the indigenous told the Spanish of the arrival of ancient preachers to their lands—among them Bochica—they spoke of twenty "ages" (see, for example, Zamora 1980 1, p. 275). On the other hand, the units of the Muisca calendar had names such as *jizca*, *ubchijica*, *quichajizca*, and *gueza*. The first three of these terms have the suffix *ca* (*cercado*) while *gueza* meant "without a home" (Acosta 1938, p. 150).

There certainly seems to be a connection between the "house" and keeping track of time. On the other hand, Castro (1955, 91 ff.) and Henderson and Ostler (2005) have emphasized the importance of the term *gue*. In this section I complement their idea. *Gue* was translated as "house," "place" or "village" (*aldea*, *pueblo*); it undoubtedly referred to identity. For example, "native of Suba" was *Suba gue* and "native of Cota" *Cota gue* (Anónimo 1987, p. 282). A 1587 document suggests that the addition of the prefix *moxi*, *gue*, or *gua* could refer to the Muisca territory in its entirety, so that *moxigua* would mean something like "the house of the Muisca" (AGN C+I 22 f 328r; in Langebaek 1987a, p. 105). Rozo (1997a, p. 25) interprets *gueta* as the union of "house" and "plot" (in the sense of agricultural plot): (that is: *gue* and *uta*?). One of the possible connotations of the word *gueta*, then, is the relationship between "village/people," "house," and "time." There certainly seems to be a connection between house, time, and Muisca celebrations, again connected to the word *gue*. For example, Father Asencio (1921, p. 41) indicates that the buildings where the "drunken bouts" (*borracheras*) were held were known as *opaguegues*—another term composed of *gue*. Finally, mention should be made of another word that is used to indicate "village/people" and heaven, *quyca* (Anónimo 1987, pp. 225, 305), and that other Muisca terms, like *aca*, connect the *cercado* to the measurement of time: The word means rainy season but also "the smell of the *cercado*" (Acosta 1938, p. 29).

The relationship between the cosmos, the home, the temple, and the village has many equivalents in the ethnographic literature. In many indigenous communities villages and houses are considered to be genuine calendars (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975; Osborn 1986). In the Amazon region it is common to think of chiefs as the "owners of

the houses" (Goldman 1963, p. 39). In the Vaupés, the maloca's central post is linked to the idea of the "Sun shaman" (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1968, pp. 77–89). Among the Makuna large posts are associated with the mountains that hold up the sky and the smaller ones with the passage of the Sun (Århem 1998, pp. 654–693). The Warao of the Lower Orinoco think of their malocas as points in the cosmic geography (Wilbert 1981, pp. 45–50). And the huts of the Cuna of Panamá are cosmological reference points and allegories of the way society is organized; the smaller posts are the members of the community and the main ones represent the leaders (Howe 1997).

However, more surprising still are the analogies that can be established with the U'wa and the Kogi, both Chibcha-speaking peoples. Osborn (1986, p. 6) describes how the U'wa dwellings are oriented according to the axis of the rising and setting Sun. The east-facing wall is constructed from a series of posts with an entrance in the center, and is used to track the movements of the star. Reichel-Dolmatoff (1996, p. 290) confirms that among the Kogi "each temple… symbolizes the political structure of the tribe, in as much as its different structural components, and the way they are related, are identified with particular administrative and religious roles." For the Kogi the sanctuaries are "house-worlds" and in them the post to the right of the eastern entrance is associated with the most important religious leader (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975). Following this line of thought it is tempting to think not only of the contrasts between the eastern and western sectors of El Infiernito but also that the arrangement of east-west oriented columns in the eastern sector might function as a "house" whose posts served to track the movements of the Sun. At the least it may be mentioned that among the U'wa the arrangements of monoliths, like the dwellings, is oriented east-west (Osborn 1986, p. 6); that frequently they are found on raised platforms close to the confluence of rivers; that they consist of two pairs of rows that cross in a central area; that they are aligned with the ridge of a mountain; and that the Sun moves between solstices (Osborn 1986, p. 7). The similarity with El Infiernito is evident.

One of the structures in Tunja where columns have been found may provide another clue to the relationship between monoliths and the dwelling calendars. A site excavated by Hernández de Alba (1937, p. 12) consists of traces of posts, pots, charcoal, a fragment of a grinding stone, lithics, and the remains of the skull of a child. The structure also had a central post (Hernández de Alba 1937, p. 13). This was a building that was bounded by well-polished, round posts except on the eastern side where a rectangular slab was found that was completely different to the others. Hernández de Alba also interpreted another, larger, structure, also round, and also bounded by columns, as a dwelling. The structure in the eastern sector of El Infiernito is not round, and bears more resemblance to the double lines of columns described by Osborn (1986) in the Sierra Nevada del Cocuy. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that other structures made of monoliths at El Infiernito have been described as ring-shaped (Cristancho 1918, p. 27). Additionally, Manuel Vélez, who visited El Infiernito in the nineteenth century, describes not only the rectangular structure visible today but also a circle 13 m in diameter marked out by 13 stones (Broadbent 1969, p. 19). Hernández de Alba himself (1937, p. 13) suggests there might have been

a relationship between the columns he found in Tunja, sacrifices, and the ceremonies associated with the calendar. To complement this idea, testimony is provided by Simón, who explicitly mentions that the "temple" in Tunja to which the stones were being brought served as a place of sacrifice and to carry out astronomic observations "on certain days of the year" (Simón 1981 3, p. 422).

Wordgames and the Synchrony of History

This, then, is the extent of the ethnohistorical and ethnographic information in all its richness of detail and provocative suggestiveness. However, rather than concluding that the question of the sources of power in Muisca society has been resolved by one particular interpretation, it is important to examine the role that ethnohistorical and ethnological information is able to play in the interpretation of the archaeological record. I should begin this discussion by recognizing that these sources of information provide the archaeologist with useful analogies. I hope I have not wasted the time invested in the preceding pages: In the end, as Politis says (2004, p. 97), comparisons such as those I have presented in this chapter have the virtue of at least avoiding the trap of thinking in terms of models based on the idea that any spatial difference in terms of "wealth" implies the existence of social distinctions based on the unequal, inherited, and material-based elites. And this is a welcome antidote above all when it comes to interpreting power and authority in pre-Hispanic societies. Precisely one of the problems of an archaeology that rejects any use of ethnohistorical and ethnological information has been its tendency to consider contemporary patterns of behavior—including the idea that power is based on the control of land and the labor force—as universal. From this perspective it is apparent that an analysis of archival information and ethnography might provide ideas that are relevant to an understanding of cultural contexts that are closer to the society studied than they are to the society the investigator comes from.

The use of ethnohistorical and ethnographic information opens up thinking about the archaeological record according to perspectives that complement the merely economic. For Sahlins (1997, p. 303), material and social aspects cannot be treated as if the former only had to do with the exploitation of nature and the latter with relationships between human beings. In and of themselves, material forces lack meaning and can only be understood with the help of coordinates of the "cultural order." However, at the same time the nature of these "coordinates" is not gratuitous: They depend on processes that are for the most part impossible to understand if material as well as nonmaterial factors are not taken into account (Sahlins 1997, p. 205). Recently, Flannery and Marcus (1996) have insisted on the importance, not of ingenuously rejecting the significance of evolutionary studies focused on material aspects, but of dealing seriously and rigorously with other complementary problems. Pre-Hispanic societies must not be seen as being dependent on ideologies that function free of any articulation with the political, the environmental or the economic—as, lamentably, they are sometimes presented—just as ideology cannot

be continued to be treated as a nebulous area about which anything may be said or as a trivial epiphenomenon of no interest whatsoever. In any case, given that the archival information, the chronicles and the ethnographical literature are full of information on aspects of ideology, the ease with which archaeologists may accede to them to help in the interpretation of the indigenous societies they excavate offers an opportunity not to be missed.

However, all this should be approached calmly. In this chapter, the reader has been confronted with archaeological information on the one hand and ethnohistory and ethnography on the other. The former has been used to question the validity of affirming that power among the Muisca was based on the control over fertile lands and the labor force, at least in the case of El Infiernito. Using the latter, I have suggested that the structure of the site corresponds to the dual organization of indigenous society. Nevertheless, I should counsel caution: Archaeological information on the one hand and ethnohistory and ethnography on the other are not at the same level—they are not even contrastable. And here I should refer to the limitations of the ethnographic and ethnohistorical disciplines or, at least, to the caution that should be exercised if they are to be employed when interpreting archaeological sites. Even though ethnohistorical and ethnographic evidence can be used productively as a source of questions and cautionary notes about the past it cannot be to prove anything. No information on the Muisca during the sixteenth century, even if it has been analyzed by the most competent of researchers, may be used to prove any idea about the past. This is for many reasons. First, because the archaeological sequence represents a dynamic process, while reconstruction, ethnohistory and ethnology all refer to a precise moment—unique and irreplaceable and always never really pre-Hispanic—within the sequence. That is, it will never be possible to establish the significance of feasting of the distant past, or even to the end of the pre-Hispanic period, based on the nature of feasting in a different context, no matter how culturally similar that context might appear. Second, because analogy is offered on the basis of a "what should be" that may not adequately reflect social conduct. For example, the exercise of reconstructing meaning on the basis of grammars is very risky because the language in use may or may not represent social activities. Frequently, as Lewis Morgan demonstrated in the nineteenth century, terms represent archaic meanings that have been left behind by social practice. Terms such as *uta* or *gue* might have a meaning that refers to practices that had already been abandoned and had no meaning for the Muisca of the sixteenth century. The interpretation of any linguistic category presents similar problems. For example, in this chapter I have construed the term *gueta* according to a perspective that linked its meaning to *cercado*, house, farming, and time in order to support the argument that chiefs were important in measuring time and predicting the weather. However, a few years ago I used the same word to suggest that the Muisca had two kinds of dwelling: *gue* in their villages and *gueta* in the countryside (Langebaek 1985, p. 41). I could play with these terms a thousand and one times and at the end of the exercise I would have no new elements to enable me to know which of the two interpretations is more valid or even to resolve satisfactorily the question of whether the alternatives are mutually exclusive.

But there is more: ethnohistory and ethnography can cause archaeology to lose its historical sense. It can reasonably be argued that dualism affected different spheres of Muisca life: the ideological, the social, and the political. However, even assuming this an unquestionable fact, what does this mean in terms of the final goal: Understanding what societies in the past were like and how they changed over time? According to some authors, when dual social relations occur within a broader ideological framework—rather than existing merely as a result of demographic or ecological considerations—they are characterized by their duration and their resistance to change (Maybury-Lewis 1989). Examples of this exist in the Americas. Levi-Strauss (1969, pp. 218–219) notes that in the Brazilian jungle Bororo villages have maintained their basic structure during long periods despite the fact that because of poor soil quality they are obliged to move every 30 years or so. Wüst (1994) notes the extraordinary depth in time that the Bororo villages divided in moieties have existed, and research by Heckenberger et al. (1999, p. 364) on circular villages excavated in the Upper Xingú points in the same direction. In the Antilles (Curet 1996, p. 118; Siegel 1996, pp. 315, 323), saladoid groups settled around 400 to 500 BC in circular villages similar to those of Central Brazil that continued to function for around 1,000 years. El Infiernito does not escape this logic and the two ring-shaped settlements may have lasted for some 2,000 years.

However, what about the question of social change? Clearly, to establish that a dual settlement, or one divided into moieties, existed at El Infiernito is provoking but does not help to understand what exactly changed over time. When Levi Strauss (1994, pp. 165–191) first proposed their existence in Brazil he noted that the relationships between moieties can vary considerably: They may lead to collaboration or conflict. There is no defined relationship between the moieties and kinship relations. The great majority is matrilineal—as were the Muisca of the sixteenth century—but this is not always the case (Murdock 1949, p. 215). They may or may not be based on reciprocal exchange or marriage alliances. In the case of the U'was, described by Osborn, there are definite cooperative ties but there is nothing to suggest that this must have been the case throughout the pre-Hispanic sequence of El Infiernito. It cannot even be asserted with confidence that these relations characterized the U'wa even 20 years before Osborn's visit.

Plus, in terms of the development of social inequality, dual societies can be anything. Initially the ring villages of Central Brazil were described as egalitarian : Their organization in moieties might have demonstrated an extraordinary degree of cultural complexity but not of social hierarchy. According to Fox (1979, p. 168) the system of moieties had a rudimentary origin—a product of local hordes that began to exchange women before growing and dividing into clans or lineages while maintaining their identity. Similarly, Ember et al. (1974) demonstrated that societies organized in moieties tend to be relatively small. Sahlins (1997, p. 49) notes that, despite resistance to change a system of moieties eventually enters into conflict with its capacity to accumulate historical contradictions, it changes. Its ambiguity as a system that is "complementary but unequal, symmetrical nevertheless asymmetrical" leads to a process in which, under the pretext of equality, a process occurs that encourages the "undissimulated development of chieftainship and hierarchy. " In his

analysis Sahlins suggest a characteristic of the societies divided in moieties that also seems to apply to the Muisca of the sixteenth century: the unresolved tension between "tribute" and "reciprocity." However, who could forget that dualism has been used to explain the Inca Empire itself! Is that not an example of a dual society? (Zuidema 1995). On the other hand, what exactly does it mean when we say that a pattern of dual organization is common among Chibcha-speaking indigenous societies? Does it mean that they were all the same in the aspects that we are most interested in studying? Or does it mean that dualism may become something totally irrelevant when it comes to gaining a deeper understanding of their differences? What is clear is that dual societies may be very dynamic (Dozier 1965). Rackerby (1968) criticized Levi Strauss for assuming that the similarity between pre-Hispanic sites and the circular villages of the Bororo implied that the social organization of ancient societies was identical to the Bororo whose culture had been studied ethnographically. The supposed equality of this culture could not be assumed to apply to past societies. Levi Strauss himself (1969, p. 229) mentioned that among the Bororo one of the moieties (*cera*) had the political and religious power while the other (*tubaré*) did not, and he demonstrated that although the system appeared to be egalitarian and characterized by mutual responsibilities it in fact made room for the division of society into hierarchically organized endogamous social groups.

More recently Spencer (1994) and Heckenberger (1998) have suggested that societies divided in moieties can be decidedly complex, although they rarely develop institutionalized forms of leadership. Research by Wüst and Barreto (1999) demonstrates that methods for processing cassava in the above mentioned Brazilian villages were concentrated in certain domestic units and the authors have even gone so far as to suggest the existence of regional settlement hierarchies. However, they have also emphasized that in these villages no ritual space had been differentiated to which the community was denied access. The distribution of dwellings around a central plaza provides access to a democratic space where ceremonial activities are concentrated (Barreto, this volume). What is clear is that, in archaeological terms, it seems absurd to maintain that dual societies all conform to one or another pattern of social organization. A dual structure has been attributed to an enormous variety of societies throughout history. Levi Strauss initially suggested that it was a very ancient form of social organization, common across the whole of the Americas, and he attempted to associate it with ancient sites in North America. In 1962, Hester argued that it was a kind of social organization characteristic of the Archaic and Formative periods. In the 1970s, the formative sites at Valdivia on the Ecuadorian coast were interpreted by analogy with the dual societies of Brazil (Isbell 1978), an interpretation that was suggested again years later (Damp 1984). Furthermore, Reichel-Dolmatoff (1985) believed that the archaic organization of mound-dwellers such as the Monsú corresponded well to the structure of the Brazilian villages.

A question: Beyond discovering universal archetypical structures, what is obtained? Answer: Probably little more than a typology of indigenous societies with no historical meaning. Ethnographies and ethnohistorical documents cannot be used to understand pre-Hispanic societies unless archaeology helps to go beyond types themselves. The archaeological sequence at El Infiernito illustrates the extraordinary persistence and yet at the same time the dynamism of ring settlements that go

well beyond how important a concept of dual structure or the concept of *gue*—or any other concepts examined by ethnohistorians—offer particularly useful interpretative tools for the examination of historical change. Archaeologists can endlessly play with words and ethnographic analogies. Changes that occurred at El Infiernito over time despite the retention of a similar structure throughout the archaeological sequence were both local and regional in context. During the Herrera, there was a nonhierarchical pattern of small settlements scattered across the valley. During the early Muisca Period, the settlement was in two enormous villages (one of them El Infiernito itself), again without a hierarchy of settlement. And in the Late Muisca Period, there was a much more complex system of settlements, characterized by regional level hierarchies. Furthermore, at the site itself it is possible to detect important changes. Initially, the ceremonies that took place at El Infiernito do not seem to have led to the concentration of pottery forms associated with celebrations in either of the two sectors. However, during the Late Muisca Period there were significantly higher concentrations in the eastern sector. In other words, while the use of documents, chronicles and, above all, the grammars, tend to generalize about certain concepts, archaeology is more refined when it comes to recognizing differences. Although very few sites and regions have been studied systematically, it is clear that they exhibit important differences: Not all the sites that have been excavated exhibit the double-ring structure found at El Infiernito; monoliths are not found at all the sites; and there are important differences in the patterns of settlement and in the relationship between settlement and resources, and in the demographic dynamics that characterize them.

It can be argued that ethnohistory and ethnography alert us to the risks inherent in interpreting the accumulation of indicators of wealth in certain sectors of Muisca sites as evidence of the creation of elites who appropriated the riches they indicate. And I am convinced that we archaeologists have fallen into the narrow thinking that characterizes capitalist determinations of what constitutes power, and that these determinations have been applied, erroneously, to indigenous societies. This does not imply that I accept the contrary essentialism of Clastres (1978), who argued that all indigenous societies show an aversion to authority and obedience. I simply emphasize the need to vindicate diversity and history, both of which are ignored by synchronous analogy. I believe any progress in our understanding of pre-Hispanic societies will require further archaeological activity more than ethnohistorical or ethnographical analysis. Ethnography and ethnohistory might continue to offer up interesting questions but to find the answers it will be necessary to return to the field. Happily, what is enjoyable about archaeology is that it continues to be a permanent process of articulation between questions, answers, doubts and criticisms, and not a mere probatory exercise.

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