



# Introduction to Status and Identity in the Imperial Andes: A Collection of Transhistorical Studies

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## Abstract

The papers in this special issue arise from the Status and Identity in the Imperial Andes session held at the 2017 meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Vancouver, Canada. That session focused on the role of status and power in shaping colonial interactions and identities throughout the Andes during the fifteenth to seventeenth century CE. The papers in this issue examine how Inka and colonial period individuals (indigenous, African, Iberian, mestizo, etc.) selectively incorporated or rejected Imperial goods, and how differing levels of access to these goods may have influenced social status, health, and relationships with imperial actors.

**Keywords** Imperialism · Colonialism · Andes · Status · Identity · Transhistorical · Transconquest

## Introduction

The thematic conception of this special issue of the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* emerged from a symposium entitled “Status and Identity in the Imperial Andes” held at the 2017 Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting in Vancouver, Canada. The goal of the symposium, as well as this issue, was to bring

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together a range of studies on status, power, and identity in transhistorical and trans-Andean imperial contexts (see Fig. 1). Within this issue, paper topics range from the ethnicity of retainers on Inka estates in the Inka heartland, to the religious identity of indigenous practitioners of the Taki Onqoy revitalization movement in the Early Colonial Period, to the use of Huánuco Pampa as a national heritage site in modern Peruvian national identity. What ties the papers in this issue together is their focus on the material and institutional changes and continuities of daily life for subjects of the Inka and Spanish Empires. While we have tried to include examples of research from Inka, Colonial, and Republican periods throughout the Andes, many of our papers are truly transhistorical in nature. This issue attempts to trace change and continuity throughout multiple generations and time periods, bridging the “great temporal divide” between prehispanic and colonial studies (Appadurai 1991; Bray, this volume; Cobb 2005; Harris 1995; Trouillot 1991; VanValkenburgh, this volume; Wernke 2013).

We choose to use “*status*” and “*identity*” as the central themes in this issue to focus on the variability and nuances of daily social life in imperial contexts. *Status* speaks to an individual’s position within a social class or system, encompassing themes of power, control, and differential access to resources. In imperial settings, status can refer to “the cultural and legal hierarchical differences between colonizers and the colonized, as well as among the Spanish colonial racial estates (peninsulares, criollos, indios, negros, castas), socioeconomic status (elites vs. commoners), and gender (usually, men and women)” (Voss 2012:39). *Identity*, like status, is a broad term used to describe a person’s self-perception, including such things as one’s ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, language, and religious beliefs. Identity is not only how individuals name and view themselves, but also how they are named and viewed by others. As Voss (2005:461) notes, in imperial settings, “the politics of such namings point to relationships of authority and coercion in cultural discourse - the power to name oneself is, for example, quite different from the power to assign a name to others.”

It is within this interplay of status and identity that we situate this issue. The articles presented here examine how Inka and Colonial period individuals (indigenous, African, mestizo, etc.) selectively incorporated or rejected Imperial goods, and how differing levels of access to these goods may have influenced social status, health, and relationships with imperial actors. While these articles seek to examine the nature of cultural change and continuity in imperial contexts through material culture, they also move past the reductionist dichotomies of change/continuity and colonizer/colonized to examine the long-term, multi-directional interactions, negotiations, and entanglements between indigenous and Imperial individuals, material objects, and their environment (Jordan 2009; Silliman 2009, 2016).

## Background

The themes presented in this collection of papers build on work by household historical archaeologists that first studied identity in Spanish Colonial Florida and the circum-Caribbean (Deagan 1974, 1996, 1998; Landers 1999). Deagan’s work at St. Augustine, Florida examined the role of acculturation and identity among indigenous and Spanish individuals. Through the process of ethnogenesis, Deagan observed the intermarriage between indigenous and African women and European men as a creolized process that created *mestizaje* – a totally new creole culture (Deagan 1983, 1996, 1998). For Deagan, women’s work in the household and domestic contexts (through the foods

they prepared and the ways in which they prepared them) in colonial settings in Florida and the Caribbean were the principle ways women helped create a new creolized culture. While some scholars challenge the “St. Augustine Pattern” for its generalized explanation encompassing all Spanish American colonial contexts, as well as its dualistic categories in artifact analysis and interpretation (Voss 2008a), Deagan’s household approach to identity studies in imperial contexts had a major impact on subsequent studies, precipitating a new generation of research focused on colonization in the New World.

These new colonial period archaeology studies, beginning in the early 2000s, have focused on the variabilities of identity, race, labor, power, status, and lived realities of colonial individuals in a wide variety of colonial contexts (Dietler 2005, 2007; Ewen 2000; Jaimeson 2005; Lenik 2012; Loren 2000, 2017; Panich 2013; Panich et al. 2014; Silliman 2009, 2010; Stein 2005; VanValkenburgh 2012, 2017; Voss 2005; Voss 2008a, b, c; Wernke 2013). In the Andes, historians and archaeologists have recently examined race and status in the colonial period through clothing choices (Presta 2010; Walker 2017), food choices (Jamieson and Sayre 2010), legal mobilization (McKinley 2016; O’Toole 2012), and social hierarchies (De La Cadena 2000, 2005; Dueñas 2017; Jamieson 2005).

It is our hope that this volume builds on these recent studies by focusing on the material remains of understudied periods of colonial contact - in-between periods, early colonial periods, late colonial periods, transhistorical periods - and the often-unheard voices of these periods (Africans, coerced laborers). With this goal in mind, we have selected case studies which investigate daily life of local communities during colonial/imperial encounters. In these interpretations, we strive to move past the dualistic interpretation of the relationship between colonizer/colonized and dominance/resistance narratives. Instead, we examine a variety of positions and reactions, keeping in mind the various local politics of each case-study. We follow Silliman (2001) and provide a variety of multiscale approaches to long-term interactions, negotiations, and entanglements of indigenous and European individuals, hoping to connect “contact” interactions with the development of more subtle, creolized practices over time.

While many of the papers in this issue examine the varied ways in which Inka and colonial period individuals incorporated Imperial goods in their daily lives, we want to stress that the presence and/or absence of certain goods does not necessarily indicate a lack of access to these goods. During colonial encounters, local communities made decisions about new economic and social systems within their own structured framework, and these decisions were situational and served a variety of functions (Silliman 2001, see also Cossin, this volume, Hernández and Osoreo, this volume, and Quave et al., this volume, for examples).

In the following section, we summarize the collection of articles, highlighting similar themes, all while stressing the contextual and situational nature of each of these case studies (Fig. 1). Although the articles in this volume tend to take a bottom-up perspective to study the disparate nature of colonialism, this does not negate the chaotic damage wrought at the hands of the Inka and Spaniards on local indigenous populations.

## Introduction of Papers

This collection of papers begins with a theoretical piece on temporality and historicity by Tamara Bray. While Bray’s paper is not chronologically first among these articles



Fig. 1 Locations of sites discussed in this volume of articles. Map by S. M. Norman

(her study is situated in the Early Colonial Period in highland Ecuador), we choose to present Bray's paper first as it takes the most deliberate postcolonial approach to the study of status and identity in this collection. Bray examines indigeno-centric perspectives on temporal plurality within a colonial regime of historicity. She argues that the inclusion of the old (local) and new (foreign) in a burial tomb in Shanshipampa is evidence that indigenous people recognized the entanglement of their own futures with the Spanish and intended to build lives "on their own terms" as a type of simultaneous "radical continuity" and "radical change." Continuity and change are key concepts discussed throughout this collection of papers, and Bray's paper is innovative in that it

challenges assumptions about the universality of historical time and the significance of European objects in indigenous contexts.

The following two papers by Hernández and Osoreo and Quave, Kennedy, and Covey represent the earliest chronological studies in our collection and both use the study of foodways to investigate ethnic identity and status of indigenous groups (the Yauyos and the Ayarmaka, respectively) *before* and *during* Inka expansion and incorporation. Hernández and Osoreo use architectural, ceramic, and zooarchaeological spatial analysis to argue that every-day domestic life at the site of Ampugasa in the Huarochirí highlands was not strongly impacted by the Inka presence. While they found that there was an adoption of Inka ceramic vessels, they observed the architectural changes and domestic consumption patterns as following local lifeways and ritual practices already existing in Huarochirí.

Quave et al. also use ceramic and zooarchaeological remains to examine status and identity in the Maras Plain outside of Cusco in the Inka imperial heartland. In their paper, Quave et al. compare foodways practices from the site of Yunkaray (the capital of the Ayarmaka ethnic group, occupied through the eleventh to fifteenth century CE) with that of Cheqoq (an Inka royal estate that housed a group of multi-ethnic retainers serving the Inka elite). They argue that daily meals consumed within this region reveal uneven processes of “inkanization” in the Inka heartland. Their findings demonstrate how migrated retainer laborers appear more ethnically “inka” than the Ayarmaka, who maintained local foodways practices as independent subjects of the Inka.

The papers by Hernández and Osoreo and Quave et al. demonstrate the importance of foodways and domestic activities in examining complicated concepts such as status, ethnicity, and identity, and these material correlates are also highlighted in several other papers in this issue (e.g., Cossin; Kennedy et al.; Norman; and Weaver et al.). While the study of “empire” has often been cast as a totalizing concept that local groups either fully accept or reject, these two studies demonstrate the uneven incorporation of imperial practices in Inka contexts. Although investigation of the Inka Empire is not generally considered “traditional” historical archaeology, we suggest that Inka imperial pursuits served as a blueprint for the subsequent Spanish conquest. In this way, a study of Spanish colonialism in Peru should not begin in 1532, but rather in the preceding 100 years of Inka expansion and control.

Covey and Aráoz, as well as Menaker, also examine status and identity during Inka expansion and the Late Horizon Periods. However, these two papers differ from the rest of our collection as they take an extended, long-term approach to *transconquest* by examining the change of Inka and pre-Inka landscapes throughout the colonial and Republican periods until the present day. In their paper, Covey and Aráoz examine the continual transformation of the administrative Inka center of Huánuco Pampa through architecture and urban planning. They explore how these architectural designs influenced local identity-building and encouraged long-term use of the site up until its present-day use as a national heritage site. Menaker also explores long-term landscape changes, focusing his examination of missionization in the Andagua Valley, where he explores material traces of ritual from pre-Inka huacas and painted stones discs to the placement of Christian crosses to highlight how the landscape served to incorporate both people and places into ritual and religious beliefs.

Norman also examines indigenous ritual and religious practices in the Early Colonial Period (~1532–80s CE). Norman examines the material remains of the 1560s Taki Onqoy revitalization movement and its performance at the site of Iglesiachayoq (Ayacucho, Peru). Utilizing faunal and ceramic data, Norman argues that despite the radical behavior changes demanded by both Catholic authorities and Taki Onqoy preachers, daily life at

Iglesiachayoq was not greatly altered. However, in the critical realm of death and treatment of the dead, burial remains indicated that some indigenous people conformed to Catholic ritual practices in public spaces while others altered burials to maintain indigenous mortuary traditions that required access to bodies of dead ancestors.

Kennedy, Chiou, and VanValkenburgh provide a case study from the *reducción* (forced resettlement) period (1570–1650s CE) on the north coast of Peru, using foodways to examine short- and long-term changes to cuisine practices (again, see Cossin; Hernández and Osore; Norman; Quave et al.; and Weaver et al., this volume, for comparative foodways studies). In this article, Kennedy et al. combine zooarchaeological and paleobotanical remains from the *reducción* sites of Carrizales and Mocupe Viejo to explore the contextual nature of identity and cuisine. Their results indicate how foodways practices evolved over the short- and long-term, with differential use of public, private, and ecclesiastical spaces within the *reducciones*, and how these practices engrained and solidified identities over the long term.

Weaver also incorporates foodways into his case study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Jesuit-owned wine and brandy haciendas in Nasca, Peru. The contribution by Weaver is unique in this volume, as it is the only article that examines status and identity from the viewpoint of enslaved Africans. In this article, Weaver combines zooarchaeological and paleobotanical analysis to examine foodways and provisioning among African slaves and indigenous and mestizo laborers. Weaver argues that African slaves were able to provision themselves through the maintenance of “slave gardens” and slave-made ceramics, drawing on their West and Central African identities and traditional foodways practices.

The last research paper in our collection comes from Zev Cossin and his study of haciendas in Ecuador going into the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. In this paper, Cossin combines historical documents, oral histories, and archaeological evidence of foodways practices to explore collective forms of identity within the community of the Hacienda Guachalá in the Ecuadorian Highlands. Using the remains of domestic practices, Cossin argues that family and community identities were formed through the process of meal sharing and indigenous exchange networks. Cossin’s paper highlights the long-term approach to imperial studies seen in many of the contributions within this issue (e.g., Covey and Aráoz; Menaker), situating his study of Ecuadorian haciendas up into the present day.

The final contribution to our collection is a commentary by Parker VanValkenburgh, returning to many of the topics that Tamara Bray first outlined in the opening to this issue. VanValkenburgh takes stock of the present state of historical archaeology in the Andes, giving credit to recent work on “transconquest” studies (Van Buren 1993, 1996; Wernke 2007a, b, 2013) which generated a new flux of research concentrated on the material continuities between prehispanic and colonial periods. In his commentary, VanValkenburgh identifies a variety of recurrent themes in many of the articles, such as the situational and fluid nature of identity in colonial contexts, the materiality of hidden and private behaviors in the archaeological record, and the concern with status and identity of non-human subjects, such as landscapes, the dead, and the supernatural. VanValkenburgh concludes his commentary by identifying two important directions for the field of transhistorical studies in the Andes: 1) the focus on individual subject formation (apart from reductionist dichotomies of colonizer/colonized, indigenous/Spanish, Christian/Non-Christian, dominance/resistance), and 2) the exploration and critical

contemplation of temporality and historicity in imperial periods studies. For VanValkenburgh, one of the most important takeaways from this collection of articles is the range of new possibilities for future transhistorical studies, engaging “archaeologies of the Prehispanic, colonial, Republican, and contemporary eras” (this volume).

## Future Directions

The articles in this volume examine the material remains of daily life in Imperial contexts, providing new insights into the various ways that status and identity were experienced throughout the Andes. These case studies underscore the ways in which archaeology has the unique ability to document the material expressions of behavior, and in the context of colonial studies, give voice to past ingenuity, community, generosity, and the aesthetics of Andean life. While this collection of articles is by no means exhaustive, we hope that these articles present compelling evidence for the worthiness of the study of complex topics such as identity and status, and we also hope that this volume stimulates further research into these themes, especially in transhistorical contexts.

Much of what can go into a special issue is dependent on timing - which researchers are available, when the research is carried out, and when the data are ready for publication. In that vein, we acknowledge that additional types of data would have been a welcome addition to this volume on status and identity. For example, skeletal and isotope data from bioarchaeological research are important to study how race, status, and wealth became physically embodied in colonial individuals, studied through markers of diet, migration, physical health, and labor. Bioarchaeological studies are also important for the identification of sex and age in the archaeological record, and as VanValkenburgh rightly notes in his commentary piece, more work is needed in the fields of gender and sexuality. Finally, research of marginalized communities, especially Afrodescendant communities, is still needed (although see Weaver 2015 and Weaver, this volume). Thus, there are many more facets to identity that remain understudied in transhistorical contexts, and we hope that the articles in this volume stimulate new research and discussions in the future.

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