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When archeology gets out of hand from conventional theories and becomes an avant-garde of ethnogenesis in the Americas, ethics, professional practice and the subject of study are confronted in a power struggle. How to look and use ancestors, to rebuild the indigenous history in the continent? Archaeological sites become spaces that respond to local policies in a post-colonial globalized world. Readings of post-processual criticism in archeology, of Andean literature interested in pre-columbian past, and of the indigenous movement in the Americas, may help to identify all the various ways for using the past. In Ecuador, both historical and prehispanic consciousness have changed little, since 1995, when Salazar presented the conclusion that the majority of highland (Sierra) indian groups pointed to the Inkas as their direct ancestors. Today, the inventory of archaeological sites registers a resounding minority of Inka sites and it cannot go, without questioning, the fact that current indigenous thought promotes a prehispanic past with an Inka background, which contradicts the physical evidence from the archaeological record. The selective use of archaeological data is becoming the norm, thus limiting the possibility for indigenous movements to challenge the reconstructions of colonial and western history. How far can we talk about ethics and liberties?

Perceptions of the archaeological record

Currently, there are, in poetry, literature, and the history of Ecuador (Espinosa 1995, Estupiñán 2003, Yáñez-Cossio 2008), different views of the archaeological, all starting from a dramatic past. They generate, in the minds of people, both mestizos and indigenous, the perception that present day natives are only what is left of the Inkas and their culture. In Cultural Studies, the past, far from being mythological, takes on life and meaning for the subordinate, or rather marginal, worlds, but particularly for the political movements of the Andes of the 20th and 21st centuries. The context in which we reproduce ourselves culturally, be it called "postcolonial" or "post-occidental", needs an ancestral anchor in order *to look into the future*. This idea is widely used in archeology and in political campaign speeches, in times of popular elections, but it only becomes meaningful and dynamic under the approach of Cultural Studies. Therefore it's relevant for Venn (2000:44) to grant postcoloniality, "an imagined space", meaning the space to imagine the 'post' of modernity, a space beyond occidentalism, therefore, an emergency space of the futurity" because, at least, it opens itself to another way to see the world, in which, suddenly, the long-gone ancients, ahistorical (or prehistoric?) beings appear and take leadership to utter words that may not want to be written yet. But is this really happening? Do indigenous peoples today necessarily know their past? Does the indigenous world have alternative explanations to their past or, like the white-mestizos, take from history only what suits them?

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Written by Josefina Vásquez Pazmiño

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Firstly, it can be said that a certain vision of archeology, backed by esthetics, has been used to materially support the processes of ethnogenesis in the Americas. In the continent, there is a conscious or unconscious systematization of thought on self-ethnogenesis under the praxis of perceptions that the indigenous population have constituted on the archaeological. In the North, for example, are the native tribes of the United States and Canada, which prompted the enactment of the 1990 NAGPRA law (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) to defend their rights on their archaeological heritage, inextricably connected to their ancestral territory. In the South, appears the territorial modification of Mapuche de Gulumapu (between Chile and Argentina) with the indigenous law of 2005. In between, particularly in the Andean region, the constant inkanization of its aboriginal people can be seen, going along with the pace of the political achievements of the indigenous movements since 1990. In Ecuador, state law dictates, in some instances, that archaeological sites belong to everyone, and that its management should be made from the indigenous communities, to which ancestral heritage is recognized. In most cases, these sites are used as reservoirs of memory to recreate a past that deliberately was believed to be lost. aqui

However, and secondly, the natives of Ecuador, unfortunately, are the ones who have no interest in the study of their past. In fact, among the many indigenous students now being educated in various academic centers, not one has shown interest to study archeology. Despite the anti-hegemonic discourse and the need for these groups to investigate their past, there is still no indian archaeologist. Oral memory has great historical scars, and the time of independence coincides with the indigenous ventriloquist discourse (Guerrero 1994). The idea of the pre-colonialist past is rooted in the independence movement, which did not let natives to speak or execute their wishes. In Ecuador, libertarian nobles and clergymen were the illustrated ones who recreated an Inka past for the natives, as if the thousands of indigenous communities were one indiscriminate mass (Guerrero 1994). Centuries later, in intense political and economic situations, this basic fact becomes a strategy that Latin-American states use to entrench national identities, as they see fit, in an effort to standardize its population and to provide it with a glorious "indigenous" past. Finally, between 1956 and 1976, international declarations, such as those from UNESCO and ICOMOS, suggest Latin-American states to unite to preserve and enhance the value of archaeological sites, as heritage of humanity. Apparently, what archeology was studying at the time was "something" that belonged to the state, something that suddenly turned into a universal property (Western). Until then, neither, the state nor those international measures took into account the indigenous people who were living on the old settlements and to some extent, were more related and /or active with a "buried" past.

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Nowadays, a biased heritage vision imposed from the outside by UNESCO, and hosted by mestizos of eager nostalgia, plays an essential role in the distortion of the past and the inkanization and folklorization of archeology. The Qhapac-ñan Project is an initiative of UNESCO, the World Bank and local governments, aiming to develop indigenous communities which, interestingly enough, in many cases, are not even aware of it. Ecuador is one of many areas where this type of "traditional practices" are being developed. In fact, we cannot say that there is an emphasis on Inka studies in Ecuador, by either foreign (Bray, Brown, Dorsey, Fresco, Salomon, Ogburn, Odaira) or national researchers (Almeida, Andrade, Idrovo, Estupiñán) who undoubtedly have at hand the material evidence and written sources for the reconstruction of the past. Despite the discourse of interculturality, these visions of the archaeological character which have been incorporated into literature and into the notion of "culture" forged from the nation/state, promote a shallow Inka culture as the deepest root of the past. At first glance, what we see here is either ignorance of what archeology has interpreted of our past, or simply lack of interest in seeking a deeper past beyond the Inka.

The Inkas in ancient Ecuador

In the coast, highlands (Sierra) and the Amazon jungle, there is an enormous amount of ancient settlements, traces of which transformed the landscape with tolas (mounds), camellones, albarradas, deep shaft tombs, monumental terraces, roads, public and private structures, which have been interpreted, by archeology, as evidence of the presence of complex societies. In any place where one walks, there are ceramic pieces of all ages, but one is lucky to dig and collect artifacts produced by the Inka in either imperial or local styles. Less than 10% of archaeological sites in Ecuador have Inka affiliation (Archaeological Inventory 2010), the rest of the sites corresponding to a number of earlier societies, unrecognizable by place names, but more visible than the Inka in the archaeological surface record. However, to speak about cultures, such as Vegas in the Archaic, Valdivia in the early Formative or Upano in the Regional Development period, does not have the same weight as to speak of the Inka in Ecuador. Before the arrival of the Inka, there were no state-like societies in Ecuador. It is likely that the Inka's past, due to its state society of glorious and heroic qualities, exceeds as a reference the earliest less complex societies of the Integration period (700-1450 AD). The enemies of the Inka were described by Europeans as barbaric, savage, dirty, poor, naked, and corrupt of cannibalism and sodomy. By 1500, what is now Ecuador joined the Chinchaysuyo under the quadripartite division of the Tawantisuyu (Dillehay and Netherly 1998, Hyslop 1998; Idrovo 1998, Morris 1998; Netherly 1998; Rostworowski 1999:85-86). The Inka occupied this northern region by force, and had to deal or negotiate with a number of local chiefdoms like those of the Puruha, Kañari, Panzaleo, Pasto, Palta, Manta, Wankawilka, Chono, Yawachi, among many others, just before the period of the Spanish conquest. Historians handle texts, taken in some cases as if they were indisputable truths, and on their basis, they have been accomplices with the state in creating national heroes such as Atahualpa and Rumiñahui

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(Andrade 1997, Estupiñán 2003), as if these were the only indigenous heroes. And thanks to nationalistic and romantic publications, the general public, to put it in some way, has ended up being unaware of any past beyond the Inka. What impact does this position have on the archaeological record?

The desire for the Inka

The indigenous population of Ecuador is not a homogeneous community; on the contrary, there are 14 indigenous nationalities and 23 indigenous peoples. Therefore, there are 14 different languages, worldviews, histories, economies, justice systems, traditional medicines and radically different beliefs. The 14 indigenous nationalities are: Achuar, Awa, Chachi, Cofan, Epera, Waorani, Shiwiar, Secoya, Shuar, Siona, Tsa'chila, Zápara, Manteño-wankawilca, and Kichwa. Inside the Kichwa nationality, there are fourteen different peoples in the highlands (Chibuleo, Kañari, Karanki, Kayambi, Kitukara, Natawela, Otavalo, Panzaleo, Pasto, Puruwa, Salasaka, Saraguro, and Waranka) and in the Amazonian jungle there are four (Naporuna, Orellana, Pastaza and Sucumbios). Kichwa peoples share the language (Kichwa), a certain kinship and some cultural traits. The coexistence of these different nationalities, together and with mestizo people and Afro-Ecuadorian alike, produces multiple and constant changes for everyone; also identities and cultural expressions of various kinds are recreated and redefined. One of these is the desire for the Inka that is embodied in the exercise of the Kichwa language as the general language of the forefathers, the quadripartite cosmology of the Andean world, the cult of Pachamama and Inti (essential deities of nature), and the exercise of Inka holidays, namely the Intiraymi (Muenala 2010, personal communication). This "rediscovery" of Inka monuments and iconography in colonized territories, and the trans-Andean celebration of Intiraymi in "sacred" spaces, could result to be forced. In both southern and northern highlands, the indigenous groups emphasize the use of political strategies using archaeological sites and pre-Hispanic Andean iconography as scenarios to reconfigure their processes of ethnogenesis. As a result, Inkapirca in the province of Cañar, Puntiachil and Cochassquí in Pichincha, are examples of pre-Inka archaeological sites, where the Inka are now constantly praised.

According to Muenala (2010), social communicator kwicha of Otavalo, archaeological sites are sacred places that provoke emotion. It is likely that there is a close link with the homeland and the ancestors, but there is not, necessarily, a connection with ancient objects or archaeological sites because, if such were the case, they would be respected. Muenala (2010) maintains that for 30 years, the celebration of Intiraymi in Otavalo regained strength, but indicates that, unlike what is done in Cuzco and Bolivia, for Intiraymi in Otavalo, Peguche and surrounding areas, the tradition is the ritual bath in the waterfall, at midnight on June 21. Similarly, in Otavalo and its area of influence, there's circular dancing, there is also a constant procession from house to

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house, but there is no use of fire as a ritual, but basically only dancing and singing (Muenala 2010). In Otavalo memory, for example, the Capacocha ceremony, crucial for interaction in Tawantinsuyo, is completely ignored (Bray et. al 2003). Now, what do Amazonia people know about the Pachamama or Intiraymi? Yet Intiraymi is celebrated because it's a source tourism, which clearly shows that there is a dispute between capitalism and heritage. On the use of pre-Hispanic iconography, Muenala (2010) explains that in the current self-definition of people as indigenous, they began to use motifs that are found in ancient pottery, even though its real meaning is unknown. Simply stated: pre-Columbian motifs "sell." For example, the "sol pasto" or eight-pointed star is an original element of the iconography and cosmology of the Pasto people (northern Ecuador and southwestern Colombia), but in the indigenous archaeological practice, the Pasto sun has been treated as Inka, and despite the discourse of multiculturalism, it is used in an attempt to homogenize the multinational indigenous Ecuador (Landazuri and Vásquez 2007).

Conclusions

In Ecuador, the ancient signs and symbols, as well as architectural works and archaeological objects, are not claimed or seen in its original dimension or in the context in which they were created. They are just invalidated through a biased perception of the archaeological. Recycling the past and saying it is living among us, is something that goes beyond colony, "tradition", and the lineage of "noble blood" of the Inka (Andrade 1997). Ecuadorian indigenous perception is quite shallow, which does not preclude it to become one of the most dynamic proposals, moving people from one region to another and generating a power block, the indigenous. My criticism for Ecuador is that the highland communities are apparently more powerful than those in rest of the country, allowing them to form a political process that draws very little attention to archaeological sites and to what history and archeology have to say about them. For this reason, it has facilitated the access to national and transnational societies in these spaces (Vásquez 2005), which in other countries have been the subject of indigenous ownership. When comparing the Indigenous perception of the archaeological in Ecuador with that of the Americas, it is possible to have a more objective perspective. The Mapuche of Chile, for example, are in constant opposition to the winka (Chilean mestizos) who want to redraw native borders by force. In contrast, American Indians have achieved much to re-bury their dead, even though the living are more concerned about other difficulties. While the political power of American Indian tribes does not compare to that of the Andean groups, the policy of repatriation of remains and artifacts has earned a national position unknown before. The NAGPRA law requires the federal government to pay to some extent the social and cultural damage caused in the past. It would be unnecessary to mention the genocide and cultural extermination of the Native American tribes. The important thing is the chaos that was produced, between

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generations, due to the traumatic chapter of the "Indian schools", was offset in part by NAGPRA, in the late 20th century. In the reservations of the American tribes, intangible properties, such as holidays and traditional practices, are still active and almost unchanged for 518 years. By contrast, in Ecuador, "Inkanized" celebrations are practiced, archaeological sites are neglected, contexts are destroyed, and "pieces" are obtained for sale in the black market, thus contributing to private collectors and tourism, as in the case of the newly opened Museo de El Alabado in Quito. In Ecuador there is no clear policy against actions that harm the physical integrity of archaeological sites and its material culture, and intellectual property rights.

The great failure of this use of the archaeological past is to forget that, before the Inka, there were many diverse societies. Their remnants are being destroyed because of neglect and the uprooting of local groups, while at the same time an inkanized discourse is being played defending the ancestral, the communal lands and the philosophy of the past. Rather than condemning and punishing tomb looters and the illegal collecting of cultural heritage that belonged to their ancestors, as US tribes do, our indigenous people themselves are the ones that loot archaeological sites, rent them for destruction and / or sell "products" for marketing. Although I respect and support the Ecuadorian indigenous movement, my criticism goes to the little interest in documenting their genealogical movement, which restricts, to some extent, the theoretical depth of their "ancient" practices. It is clear that indigenous people are not really legitimizing their ancestral roots; on the contrary, they are developing an amalgamated identity and Inka background, which brings them closer to the hegemonic vision of the South (Landazuri and Vásquez 2007). The funny thing is the role of the state that openly supports the re-creation of these identities, because it is a source of tourism, masking the goal of multiculturalism. It is necessary for archaeologists to present, for consideration of the indigenous movement, their interpretations of the past, instead of letting their reports be stored in government offices. Is it possible to deconstruct the hegemonic vision of "indigenous" as opposed to "mestizo" and accommodate multiculturalism? Or shall we leave the indigenous people to be Inka ... and be happy?

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