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### Karen Vieira Powers, *Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis and the State in Colonial Quito*

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*Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis and the State in Colonial Quito.* By Karen Vieira Powers. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995. xii + 236 pp. Maps, figures, tables, appendix, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$39.95 loth.)

Migration characterizes the Andean past. Native economics were based on ethnic groups' access to diverse ecological zones, although Andean peoples moved about to meet political imperatives as well from at least the time of the Tawintinsuyu. In her study of the Audiencia of Quito, Karen Powers examines Andean migration in the first two centuries of the Spanish colony. Although hers is a study in historical demography, Powers declines to recalculate Quito's population levels. Rather, she uses the demographic record to emphasize how native Andeans' movement resulted in ethnogenesis, or

cultural survival, in the face of the changing realities of life under European rule.

The major thrust of Powers' analysis rests on the identification of three waves of migration. The first, resulting from the dislocation of conquest and European disease, drove native populations from the Quito highlands to peripheral areas. The second consisted of a return flow in the early seventeenth century to meet the demand for labor and tribute imposed upon native communities. The final movement took place after 1650 and produced the disintegration of native communities and the absorption of their populations within the Spanish sectors. These trends form the basis for an imaginative interpretation of colonial Andean society.

Using a set of detailed seventeenth-century census documents, Powers traces the direction and intensity of native migration. She offers a convincing account of the struggle between native and Spanish sectors over resources—first labor, then land—and how these struggles came to be bound up in population counts in a manner reminiscent of the political battles that have surfaced over the 1990 population census in the United States. Powers further documents the ingenious indigenous use of Spanish record-keeping in which obligations to the state were tied directly to membership in a native corporation. Abandoning the communities became a rational response to colonial economics and may have begun as a conscious method of meeting community obligations through remittances from the *ausentes*. At some point in the seventeenth century, however, migration and the large numbers of absentees, now completely detached from their traditional lands, undermined the viability of the native communities. Their union with the Spanish republic notwithstanding, the native people consciously replicated Andean social norms, which explains the survival of native culture in the Ecuadorian republic.

Some of *Andean Journeys* was written principally for insiders. Powers challenges the demographic model that Robson Tyrer and Suzanne Alchon have established for colonial Quito, one that saw an early seventeenth-century population recovery in the *audiencia*. Following the approach pioneered by Nicolás Sánchez-Albornoz in the southern Andean highlands, Powers offers migration as the critical variable in writing demographic history; that is, the demographic recovery in Quito actually reflected population movement rather than vegetative growth. At the same time, she questions the legitimacy of tribute records as accurate indicators of demographic trends, concluding, perhaps prematurely, that using such records alone runs the risk of telling readers nothing more than that indigenous people died.

In the course of developing her north Andean themes, Powers gives us a wealth of detail and valuable speculation. Quito's location on the frontier of Inca territory resulted in political relations between native peoples quite different from those characteristic of the southern Andes and resulted in

decades of low-intensity interethnic struggle, which both confounded Spanish governors and gave them openings to penetrate native communities. She speculates that these disputes may have resulted from the Spaniards imposing rules of direct inheritance of political leadership on a native tradition where secondary and collateral succession were common. Powers' description of the activities of several native families in the region gives a whole new dimension to Karen Spalding's depiction of *kurakas* as social climbers.

Powers is not always entirely convincing. For example, at one point she uses cacique testimonies given to Spanish bureaucrats to support her contention of depopulation in the southern highlands of the *audiencia* just before beginning an extensive development of the ways in which native leaders established labor reserves by hiding tributaries from these same bureaucrats. She also confines herself to census data as the basis of her immigration hypothesis. I would have preferred at least a cursory examination of other sources—parochial records, for instance—as a check of reproductive and survival rates within native communities.

But even if her analysis proves incomplete, and further research rather than speculation should guide us here, Karen Vieira Powers offers readers new vistas on the Andean highlands. Her mastery of the sources, lucid style, and imaginative interpretation make *Andean Journeys* an important contribution to colonial historiography and a delightful read.

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