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### Thomas B.F. Cummins, Toasts with the Inca: Andean Abstraction and Colonial Images on Quero Vessels

Lynn Hirschkind

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## Book Reviews

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*Toasts with the Inca: Andean Abstraction and Colonial Images on Quero Vessels.*  
By Thomas B. F. Cummins. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002. xii  
+ 377 pp. Illustrations, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$69.50 cloth.)

Imperial enterprises are obliged to address challenges to their legitimacy. Material culture offers one avenue in which to express, or even negotiate, issues of authority. Such is the case with the production of, use of, and imagery on *queros* (ceremonial drinking cups). In *Toasts with the Inca*, *queros* are subject to a multifaceted analysis combining perspectives from art history, archaeology, ethnohistory, ethnography, and semiotics, resulting in a fully contextualized analysis of colonial *queros* and a model of interdisciplinary research.

Chapters 1 through 5 explain how the Inca used *queros* (and *aquillas*, made of gold and silver instead of wood or ceramic). Religious, political, economic and social action, and representation all converged in *quero* use. Always made and used in pairs, *queros* served to portray community solidarity, reciprocity, submission to authority, and legitimate order. Their antecedents in Tiahuanaco conferred legitimacy on Inca imperial designs, a service they provided again under Spanish colonial rule, where they symbolized the authority of the *curacas* over natives.

Hanan/Hurin moiety organization, with its connotations echoed in right/left, male/female, and superior/inferior oppositions, is extensively explored throughout the book. These oppositions were embodied in *quero* decorations and reinforced by Inca rituals. Thomas Cummins weaves symbolic analyses of images and colonial texts with archaeological, ethnohistorical, and ethnographic evidence, producing a well-rounded treatment of binary conceptualization. The importance of Hanan/Hurin complementarity in all Andean social life is reiterated in each chapter, becoming tedious by the end.

In Chapters 6 through 10, the author looks at Spanish colonial society through the prism of ritual and visual representations, as on painted *queros*, embossed *aquillas*, textiles, sculpted stone, carved wood, ceramics, paintings, drawings, and coats of arms. The struggle to establish and legitimate colonial order by enlisting, coopting, and adapting native institutions and leaders is illustrated and carried out through use of these arts and crafts. The extensive documentation from different fields provides convincing evidence that colonial power was negotiated through native leaders. Hybrid forms of legitimacy and power were created from the remnants of Andean social organization and conceptual systems in the framework imposed by Spanish dominion.

There is an exquisitely detailed discussion in Chapter 8 of seven pairs of silver *aquillas*, a silver bowl, and a plate recovered from the sunken Spanish galleon, *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*. The imagery on these objects shows that



Inca and Spanish decorative styles were contemporaneous and hybridized, rather than evolving from one toward the other. Native artists drew on both traditions to satisfy new aesthetic standards while assiduously avoiding any hint of idolatry.

In Chapter 9, Cummins describes the Viceroyalty of Peru as a capitalist economic institution. Based on unwarranted extrapolation from elements of market economies in Cuzco and Potosi, all economic activity is painted with commodification. Instead, most natives lived outside such centers of Spanish influence (including the failed Toledan *reducciones* mentioned in Chapter 12, p. 305). The colonial economy included more autonomous subsistence production, as well as coerced and unpaid labor, while supposedly paid labor was often nominally or sporadically remunerated, if at all.

Cummins confuses coca use in this analysis, when he states it was limited to Inca elite use (p. 202), which was subsequently controlled by the Spanish (p. 203), sold only in markets for cash (p. 203), and instrumental in acculturating natives to market economics (p. 204). Instead, coca was widely available before, during, and after the Incas, independent of administrative controls or markets.

In Chapters 11 and 12, he offers a thoughtful analysis of the complex, contradictory world of native politics, as reflected in painted *quero* images. The combination of the *quero* as a native object and symbol with European-style painting served to represent issues of status and power. In the conclusion, *queros* are shown to symbolize colonial native existence, embodying their acquiescence to—and collusion with—colonial impositions. They likewise embody a reinvention of native symbolic and conceptual vocabulary, celebrating a promised utopia that was never to be realized.

*Toasts with the Inca* is a well-organized and clearly written work. The illustrations are adequate but would have benefited from sharper photographs of the artifacts. The bibliography is truly impressive: it contains an abundance of sources from archives, colonial documents and chronicles, and literature from an array of disciplines. Scholars of Inca and colonial history, art historians, and ethnohistorians will appreciate this book.

Lynn Hirschkind  
Cuenca, Ecuador

*The Guaraní under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata.* By Barbara Ganson. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. xii + 290 pp. Illustrations, maps, table, chart, notes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 cloth.)

Few topics about Latin American "missiology" have received as much attention as the Jesuit reductions of Paraguay. The bibliography is large, probably because the reductions offer such a wide range of themes to explore