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Church of St. John the Baptist at Sutatausa: Indoctrination and Resistance

by

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AFFIRMATION OF INDEPENDENT WORK

This thesis represents my own work in accordance with University regulations.

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Introduction.

In 1994 a group of murals was found behind layers of plaster, on the white adobe interior walls of the church of St. John the Baptist in the town of Sutatausa, Cundinamarca, Colombia (Figure 1). These murals reveal the complex relationship between the Spanish and the local Muisca populations and the Spanish in early colonial times. Besides having a religious message, the murals of Sutatausa have a direct connection with Muisca visual culture. When I visited the church of Sutatausa I was struck by the rare overlapping of the figures. There were two different mural programs that at first appeared to be a continuation of the Christian imagery, but after careful observation I found they had conflicting purposes. One focused on the Passion of Christ, and the other on an incorporation of Muisca motifs embedded on portraits of the indigenous cacique elites. This conflict became further evident when I visited the cemetery of Sutatausa. In the middle of the cemetery a large rock stands with a statue of Christ the Redeemer on top of it. Over the smooth surface of the rock a series of red textile patterns are delineated (petroglyphs) (Figure 2). The juxtaposition of the statue and the textile patterns is comparable to the contradictions found at the church of Sutatausa. Moreover elements found on the textile patterns such as the overlap of the designs, and the use of the negative space are similar to the composition used on the Muisca figures in the church. The methods in which the designs are placed in the petroglyphs create a visual effect of over-pasted figures and defacement. Therefore there is an intentional disruption of the murals that shows a complex relationship between the Spanish indoctrination program and the Muisca population.

In this paper I intend to analyze the connections of the murals found at the church of Sutatausa in correlation with pre-conquest Muisca petroglyphs found in the surrounding area of Sutatausa. By examining elements of the church such as its architecture and mural programs, in conjunction with the petroglyphs, I will demonstrate that the church of Sutatausa was not just an instrument of indoctrination, but also incorporated Muisca cultural concepts. The Muisca elements found at the church can be seen as resistance to complete acculturation. Instead of maintaining their culture in clandestine practices, the murals show their adaptation to accepted Christian symbolism with embedded Muisca cultural features. The designs of the murals have a mix between Catholic imagery and a Muisca presence that created a unique colonial visual language full of tension derived from each group's intentions.

Before proceeding into a complete analysis we should determine who were the Muisca. In the sixteenth century when the Spaniards arrived in the Cundiboyacense Colombian highlands located in the Eastern Cordillera, they found a hierarchical society, with a large population living in villages, scattered on the hillsides and valleys. The Muisca were organized into chiefdoms formed by several communities under the leadership of chiefs known as caciques.¹ The Muisca began to organize in sedentary groups in 800BCE.² The population grew due to the improvement of agricultural practices, which transformed small villages into centralized states.³ The Muisca did not develop any monumental architectural or artistic works. Instead their efforts were put into the manufacture of ephemeral objects such as textiles and wood architecture.⁴ The nonexistence of monumental works of the Muisca contributed to diverse interpretations of the Muisca

civilization. The church of Sutatausa provides us with material to study the transition of the Muisca power in the colonial period.

The church's architectural structure and the murals indicate a complex relationship of resistance and adaptation of the local indigenous population towards Spanish proselytization. Studies made of the church usually separate the architectural features from the murals from Muisca cultural expressions. An example of the disjunction can be found in the studies of conservator Rodolfo Vallín who wrote about the murals and the temple architecture. Vallín described the church as a continuation of proselytizing churches found in Mexico, but did not incorporate the Colombian context.⁵ The result of the disconnection between the murals, the architecture, and the petroglyphs creates a negation of the active participation of the Muisca elite (caciques) of Sutatausa in the development and construction of the church. When the religious murals are studied in isolation interpretations focus on the indoctrinating aspects of the images. The caciques became a representation of complete acculturation. This approach disregards that caciques commissioned part of the murals; they had control over the message embedded in the murals. They also incorporated textile patterns found imprinted on petroglyphs near the area. The inclusion of Muisca elements conflicted with the Spanish indoctrinating program.

The murals provide proof of the active role Muisca caciques (elite) had in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁶ The colonial period presents us with a series of challenges, where the Spanish intend to assimilate the native population into Catholicism, while the Muisca are in a process of adaptation and cultural uncertainty. There was an active rejection of the Spanish by the indigenous people, who were famous in historical accounts for their collective suicides; they preferred to take their own lives rather than submit to Spanish

power.⁷ There was a deposition against Juan Árevalo de Montalvo, one of the first *encomenderos* (colonist granted control of land and Indians to work for him) in the area near Sutatausa, about his participation on the death of about three to four thousand people from the towns of Suta and Tausa (1549). The witness Jerónimo Lebrón declared that the Muisca rebelled against the Spanish in the area, and that Juan Árevalo de Montalvo was sent to appease them. He went to a large rock where they were gathered, ordered his men to kill them all and throw their bodies down into the gorge.⁸ There are different accounts of the deaths of a large group of Muisca near Sutatausa. Some report it as a massive suicide others as a massacre. Regardless of the real story, the massive death of a large part of the population had to increase the anxieties on the relationship with the Spanish.

Since arriving in the New World, the Spanish had to adapt to indigenous styles of worship and representation to aid in the conversion of native people. There is an integration of Spanish features with Muisca elements in sections of the architecture and murals. The architecture allowed outdoor congregations. There was also an appropriation of physical and visual space of the images of the Passion of Christ by Muisca figures. The continuation of Muisca imagery within the church transforms it into a representation of the defiance against colonial and religious authorities. To understand the visual impact this type of church had on the Muisca population we must recreate the religious journey they had. This journey was constructed through architectural space and mural imagery. Among these constructions we can find embedded native elements. Let us then proceed into the architectural description of the space in order to move into Muisca elements, their role in a colonial space, and what it tells us about the culture at the time. I will emphasize my description in a group of murals that were made over some sections depicting the Stations

of the Cross, and on the partition between the nave and the altar. This group has unique features that are a key to understanding the relationship of the Muisca population with the church of Sutatausa.

Architectural Setting of the Church of Sutatausa

The journey of the Muisca in the church of Sutatausa starts when they approach the architectural space, which is interconnected with mural scenes (Appendix 1). The architecture of the church continues to characterize the syncretism prevalent during the colonial period.⁹ The church of St. John the Baptist provides us with a complete example of an indoctrinating church. The Spanish crown had a goal to convert the native population of New Spain, and to obtain their obedience.¹⁰ The church of Sutatausa, however, was constructed as a space adapted to the native ways of worship through its architecture and mural program. Therefore this church should be seen in a syncretic way, taking into account the contributions from both cultures in the church of St. John Baptist in Sutatausa. These temples were made in areas away from central power. Encomenderos were assigned to a group of natives to manage their labor and their religious tutoring.¹¹ The church of Sutatausa is the result of a need for a temple to provide the religious instruction to the Muisca population. Early on a Catholic priest saw the need to adapt the structure of the liturgical space.¹² Books like Valadés' *Rhetorica Christiana* (1579) provided an insight into the systematization of indoctrination churches with elements like art and architecture as a way to create a multi-sensorial experience that would inspire devotion from the native population (Figure 3).¹³ The result was the emergence of the open-air church.¹⁴

The church of Sutatausa is the continuation of the mural program inside the church. It has four exterior chapels known as *capillas posas*, a characteristic of an open-air church.

These chapels are located in front of the main temple, and delimit the space of the plaza with a path that joins all the chapels. Their position creates a fusion between the space of the church and the village. The Church of Sutatausa was part of the Franciscan order; they tried to eliminate native religion, by maintaining native cultural elements.¹⁵ The result was the building of syncretic temples with catholic, and native features. Friar Diego de Valadés belonged to the Franciscan order in Mexico. He wrote a book in which he described the importance of using elements from memory that would connect space and images for a more effective way to predicate to the native population.¹⁶ In relation with the church of Sutatausa the outside chapels merge sacred and secular space. This generated a familiar space the Muisca could trust.¹⁷ The chapels are small with space for only a few people; the priest was housed in the chapel while the natives would gather in the open space around the outside.¹⁸

The Muisca might have associated the outside setting with a ritual called the *biohote*. It consisted of a communal feast with chants and dances.¹⁹ The space in between the outdoor chapels could have encouraged the Muisca to perform the *biohote*. This enactment could blur between Muisca and Christian ritual practices.²⁰ There is a reference of the *biohote* feast in the mural of the Last Judgment (Figure 5), but in this case the outside ritual is adopted into the rites of the church, rather than condemned. The feast of Corpus Christi can be seen as an adaptation of *biohote* rituals. Marta Herrera Angel theorizes that for the Muisca, the *biohote* celebration had a similar structure to the Corpus Christi celebration. In both celebrations the community gathers for the consumption of food laden with symbolic meaning.²¹ The conjunction of Muisca and Spanish beliefs constructs a distinctive colonial culture. This suggests that the strategy used by religious orders like the Franciscans to

indoctrinate all native populations they encountered allowed the survival of some of the native traditions.

Now let us continue to the main temple, which has a modest façade that characterizes most types of indoctrination churches in the area of Cundinamarca (Figure1).²² The church has a basilica shape, which highlights the cross theme for the overall church, and foci for the celebrant. Upon entering the first room we encounter the baptistery located at the left side of the entrance, a monument to conversion and rebirth. Moving into the nave, we find murals depicting the Stations of the Cross, the Last Judgment, and the cacique portraits. After the nave we find the altar and two side chapels. The altar has a large wood retablo that is placed in front of a set of murals. It was likely constructed right after the church's mural program was covered.²³ The side chapels have architectonic retablos. The left chapel has a statue of St. John the Baptist in the middle, the patron saint of the church of Sutatausa. The chapel at the right holds a crucifix with the Virgin Mary statue at his feet. At the lower right side of the retablo is a small door behind which has a narrow L-shaped tunnel. At the end there is a room with adobe walls and a dirt floor, a large wooden torture rack was found with chains, and other torture objects that were taken to the colonial museum in Bogotá (Figure 4) ²⁴ This is a unique feature to the church of Sutatausa, it is not found in other churches in the area. The chamber is located right behind the Crucifix statue, and could have served as a way to relate the suffering of Christ with Muisca suffering. In contrast to the baptistery, the church torture devices could have been used as different type of indoctrinating method, which uncovers resistance to conversion.²⁵ Besides the main temple, and the open-air chapels, the church has living quarters separated by the interior gardens. The architectural features are in harmony with the

decorative motifs. The church space was adapted to draw the Muisca people. The Spanish crown had a goal to convert the native population of New Spain, to obtain their obedience.²⁶ The church of Sutatausa was a product of the need to centralize the Muisca people that lived dispersed in the area. The dispersion created instability on the *encomienda* titles.²⁷ The church was the center of colonial towns, the church served as a point of congregation of the Muisca. This meeting point allowed the encomenderos to collect tribute, and also to have more control over the religious education of the Muisca they had assigned to them.²⁸ Consequently, the church of Sutatausa served as a tool of political and economic power. The indoctrinating mission of the church of Sutatausa was enhanced with a series of murals, which overlapped with Muisca motifs.

Passion of Christ

Inside the church the largest mural program depicts the Stations of the Cross along both sides of the nave. The scenes are placed inside a series of arches painted that create a virtual continuation of the church's space. The arches are divided by illusionistic paintings of Corinthian columns that each of the frame the scenes. The figures inside the arches are dressed in, contemporary 17th century garments heavy on drapery; they had a predominant color palette of greens and reds (Figure 6). The order of the murals established a path to follow, which created a procession around the church that stopped at each scene. The murals of the Passion of Christ are presented in a sequential order from the Last Supper to the Crucifixion (Appendix 2)²⁹. The images take the viewer through the last moments in the life of Christ, which provide the idea that suffering is the way to achieve salvation. The viewer is confronted with the performance of the figures in each scene, which is activated by the viewers' movements into a sequential arrangement of the Passion

of Christ. The Franciscans used this type of imagery as a way to create a point of association between Christianity and the life of native people.³⁰ In Colombia we can find examples of the use of scenes of the Passion of Christ. In the cloister of the church of Santa Clara La Real in the town of Tunja, near Sutatausa, was recently found a similar mural program while performing repairs.³¹ The Passion of Christ images of indoctrination transformed the nave into a passageway, which initiated conversion and redemption through the last moments of the life of Christ.

In the church of Sutatausa, the scenes of the Passion of Christ start at the right side of the entrance. The first image depicts the Last Supper, with the figures of Christ and the Apostles in front of an ornate gold tapestry. The following image has a forest landscape in which Christ prays at the Mount of Olives, with an angel in the upper left. Three of the apostles are sleeping in the lower part of the scene, while in the forest background Judas enters with a group of hazy figures moving towards Jesus. The scene of the flagellation was severely damaged due to the subsequent penetration of the wall for a window, which made restoration impossible. The Mocking of Christ scene is blank in the middle, due to damage; it has three figures, but only one is fully visible. This figure has contemporary 16th century garments, and stands to the right of Christ. He holds a rope to tie Christ, and the other figure at the left helps him. The last scene on the right wall depicts the Ecce Homo (Figure 7). Christ is presented from a balcony, with a guard in armor to the left of Christ, and the figure of Pontius Pilate to the right. Of the first mural series this one is the only mural with writing: ECCE HOMO, the presentation of Christ by Pontius Pilate. The cycle created by the episodes of the Passion of Christ continues on the left side of the nave. The next scene of the Passion has Christ Carrying the Cross; to his left side we find an armored guard pulling

Christ forward, and behind Simon helps Him to carry the Cross.³² We can identify the guard in armor from the previous scene. Then the scenes continue with the Crucifixion of Christ, but the scene has considerable damage. The same guard is at the upper left side, and Jesus is in the process of being nailed to the Cross.

The presence of the guard provides a continuation within the mural depiction. This mural is the last of the scenes of the Passion of Christ. Surprisingly, the mural series is abruptly interrupted by the erasure of the series' final scenes for a large mural of the Last Judgment. The columns are replaced by an organic design of flowers, with leaves intertwined. They have a similar pattern to the upper frieze design of the overall mural program, and create a rectangular frame for the overlapping scene. The complete program of the Passion of Christ consisted of ten scenes, but only seven survived the repurpose of the wall space. A large scene of the Last Judgment replaced the final three scenes of the Passion of Christ.³³ The Passion cycle uses sacrificial imagery that fitted Franciscan millenary theme. It contrasted with the Muisca mural program, and highlighted colonial anxieties between the Franciscans and the Muisca.

The Last Judgment Mural Scene

The Last Judgment is the largest single scene of the nave murals. This scene is rectangular, and has a wide border on its right, and left side. The border is decorated with intertwined flower designs. The scene contrasts with the simulated Corinthian columns and arches that divide the scenes of the Passion of Christ mural series. The edges of this mural allow us to see an abrupt interruption next to the Crucifixion scene. Also the composition changes; instead of almost life size figures, the Last Judgment has a greater number of figures, depicted on a smaller scale, which present multiple events happening

simultaneously (Figure 5-8). The colors used for this scene are similar to the overall palette found in the scenes of the Passion of Christ, but there is a big difference in the application of the color on the figures; the paint is less diluted, and the color red is predominant over the other colors.³⁴ The Last Judgment depicts the Second Coming of Christ, with the sinners being separated from the righteous. This type of scene conveys the fear of God and the need for pious behavior to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. In the upper center we find Christ enthroned on top of an orb. The Virgin Mary is depicted to the left of Christ, John the Evangelist to the right, and all around the apostles are seated in a three-quarter pose. Under John the Evangelist an angel carries a banner partially damaged with the word - *Malditos* a- a(*sic*) possible reference to Matthew 6:41:

Entonces dirá también a los de su izquierda: ¡Apartaos de mí, malditos, al fuego eterno preparado para el diablo y sus ángeles!
[Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!'].³⁵

In the lower right corner of the frame the Mouth of Hell is depicted. At its entrance we find a group of men with Spanish features. Most of them have a light complexion, light blue eyes, and curled Spanish mustaches. It is difficult to discern if they are dressed, or if there are other figures on their way to the Mouth of Hell due to the mural's deterioration.³⁶ Among the people near the Mouth of Hell we find a Muisca ceramic cup depiction, which appears to be out of place. It appears to be pasted on the wall above the figures, as if it had been painted as a later addition.

The cup is identified as a *chicha* (corn beer) cup. According to Tom Cummins and Joanne Rappaport, this cup is a *totuma* (Figure 5.1).³⁷ The *totuma* links the Christian ceremony of transubstantiation to the Muisca *biohote*. This ceremony consisted of community gatherings, in which they would make offerings, and share food and drinks

provided by the caciques to the natives that worked for them.³⁸ The Spanish saw these types of gatherings as opportunities for the natives to get drunk. Therefore the presence of a *chicha* vessel can be seen as a sign of the condemnation of drunkenness in indigenous culture. Scenes of drunkenness in a Christian ritual setting can be found at the Franciscan convent of Metztitlán at Santa María Xoxotelco in Mexico (Figure 9). In these murals Jaime Lara describes these representations as the depictions of idolatry and vices that can be remedied only by Christianity.³⁹ The scene at the convent of Metztitlán depicts a woman being tempted by a man offering an alcoholic drink. Behind the man and woman is an anthropomorphic figure of a demon that highlights drinking as a way to damnation. The *totuma* found in the Last Judgment mural in the church of Sutatausa has the same Christian interpretation of drunkenness, as did the representation at Santa María Xoxotelco. Contrary to the indigenous emphasis at Xoxotelco, the *totuma* is found superimposed on top of Spanish sinners in the mural, the reasons for this overlap is unclear. The cross-cultural combination of a Muisca object on top of Spanish figures displays tension between both cultures. The *totuma* looks as if it were an afterthought, but if we compare it with the petroglyphs located in adjacent areas we can understand the overlapping as a Muisca cultural practice that has not been formally explored in other studies (Figure 2). The visual structures of the petroglyph shows each design placed as isolated pieces adjacent to each other, and in some cases overlapping the images. The *totuma* in the mural has a similar placement that allows me to infer it was part of the visual program of the mural, and not a last minute addition. The *totuma* transformed into a syncretic object that represents the Muisca *biohote* as a religious celebration made with pre-conquest visual placement along with damnation and other Christian motifs.

The complex dichotomy created by the *totuma* continues in images located on the left side of the Last Judgment mural, which depicts paradise. There is an angel blowing a horn over a group of seemingly naked people, Spanish women and men. They can be identified by their fair complexion and light hair, as well as men with short hair and beards, with some of them carrying palms. Among these people there is a distinctive male figure clothed with a black jacket, with a dark complexion, and black hair parted in the middle. We can identify him as a Muisca, a cacique, whose presence is established by an inscription at the lower left side of the mural. The inscription has the patron's names, and part of a date (Figure 8):

PINTOSE ESTE JVIZIO A DEVOCION DEL PVEBLO D SVTA. SIENDO CACIQUE
DON DOMINGO Y CAPITANES, D LAZARO, don Juan Neaetariguia, Don Juan
Corula y Don Andres. 16?? [sic]
[Painted this judgment of devotion of the town of Suta being Cacique Don
Domingo, and the captains, D Lazaro, and Juan Neaetariguia, Don Juan Corula
y Don Andres. 16??.]

At the bottom, a similar Muisca man's face is visible, which appears to be a portrayal of some of the people named in the inscription.

The combination of visual and textual identification of the Muisca caciques positions them in a predominant position in the church. The inscription allows us to further our knowledge of the interaction of the Muisca caciques within the church. From recipients of religious instructions, the inscriptions place the Muisca caciques as people with economical and social power. By commissioning the murals the caciques were in control of the imagery and became part of the religious instruction. Besides providing the names of the Caciques in Sutatausa, the inscription has part of a date. This is important because before the murals were uncovered the construction date of the church was placed in the 18th century.⁴⁰ The previous dating led researchers to believe that the Spanish, and *criollos* were the only ones

that used the main church.⁴¹ It also stripped the Muisca of the recognition of their active presence within the community of Sutatausa. The painting of the Last Judgment provides us with a compositional divergence of the Muisca control obtained by their visual adaptation with the overlapping over pre-existing Catholic imagery. The combination is part of a new colonial visual language that shows the struggle for power, and how they used visual representations as a response.

Donor Portraits

The Muisca cacique commissioned donor portraits that were used as part of their visual adaptation in order to recreate their image, and maintain their power. Donor portraits have been part of the European painting tradition (Figure 10-11). Donors commissioned paintings as a way to secure a place in Heaven, and also to assert their power through their proximity to sacred figures in the paintings. The depictions sustained the holy status of religious characters in a hierarchical position; the portraits depicted the donors in a lower register, and in a smaller size.⁴² Portraits commissioned for chapels and churches show the donors as part of the religious scene, and they become a witness to the events. For example Enrico Scrovegni commissioned Giotto's Arena chapel as a way to fabricate a noble lineage, and to pay his way into Heaven (Figure 12).⁴³ In this painting we can see the patron on the side of the saved. He is depicted in a kneeling position giving a replica of the chapel before the Virgin Mary, the Virgin of Charity, and the Virgin Annunciate. This type of portrait is also apparent in the Last Judgment scene of the church of Sutatausa, but this representation contrasted with the portrait depictions in the nave division with the altar. These donor portraits were made with a unique colonial visual language; they combined portrait styles that were found in secular spaces in a religious

setting. The Spanish colonial institution had great influence on the artistic depictions. The native population saw the power of representation contained in portraiture. It was a tool to create an image that established their power in both native and colonial communities. Rappaport and Cummins indicate “there is a distinction between the universal history of Christ’s suffering and the temporal political authority of the Muisca community.”⁴⁴ This distinction connected the Muisca caciques with the existing mural program of the Passion of Christ at the church of Sutatausa. The colonial period challenged the position of the native population in the Americas, in particular the elite who had to create a new identity to balance the native and Spanish societies. The portrait served as a way to negotiate the new identity dynamics. Native art commissions throughout Latin America illustrates the complexities by the junction of two cultures.

Cacique Portraits

The second mural program at the church of Sutatausa has three Muisca donor portraits, located in the front corners of the nave (Appendix 2). These portraits give us a view of how the elite cacique wanted to be perceived by their community, with the intersection of symbols from the Muisca and the Spanish encomenderos. There are two cacique portraits located at the nave’s partition, and a female portrait on the adjacent left wall. The cacique portraits are divided into three segments: at the bottom we have the portrait, above is the image of a female saint, and at the top we find a coat of arms (Figure 10-11). These donor portraits do not have a background, and create gaps in the original mural program. In the corners of the nave we can see the cut of circular patterns that fill the space between the scenes and the columns. The caciques have similar visual characteristics. They are both depicted with a darker skin complexion, and dark hair parted

in the middle. The only difference that can be found is in their faces. The figure at the left has a mustache while the right figure appears to be younger due to his lack of facial hair; this difference signals individuality in the representations. They both wear a European style shirt, and a blue cape with a high collar. The folds of the cape were made with a different painting technique, which makes them look as a black linear pattern. This makes the figures look flat. Tom Cummins indicates that the garment similarity of the cacique to the Spanish in painted depictions is a way to mitigate their “Indianness”; the transformation of their role required a transformation of their identities.⁴⁵ The figures are depicted in a prayer position pointing towards the presbytery. The right side has a saint wearing a crown enclosed by a round halo, carrying a large feather quill (Figure 10). In her right hand she carries a white banner with a red cross, which signifies Christian victory. She is St. Ursula the patron saint of drapers and students; her mission correlates with the educative mission of the church.⁴⁶ The folds of the blue dress of St. Ursula are painted in the same heavy way as the clothing folds in the murals of the Passion of Christ. Above her we find a coat of arms with religious symbols like the cross, nails, and spears that symbolize the crucifixion. The left section of the nave has a saint depicted with the same face, crown with a circular halo, blue garment with heavy folds, and feather quill in her right hand (Figure 11). It has minor visual differences that allow us to establish her identity. To her left she holds a sword, and on the lowest section of the figure between her garments there is a breaking wheel.⁴⁷ These elements are associated with St. Catherine. The breaking wheel is associated with her death sentence; the wheel fell apart when she touched it. Subsequently she was beheaded with a sword. St. Catherine is the patron saint of philosophers, students, and preachers, which has also a relationship with the

indoctrinating objectives of the Sutatausa church.⁴⁸ Above St. Catherine there is also a coat of arms. It has the cryptogram of the holy name of Jesus, and is under it a set of three spears that intersect. The coat of arms depicts Christian scene, and the cryptogram used as a symbol of Catholicism. They have direct connection with church symbols, and the first set of murals of the Passion of Christ. These portraits have strong visual features found in secular portraiture. This type of portraiture in the Latin American context was probably used as a template for the portraits at the church of Sutatausa.

The Muisca did not have a pictorial tradition of individuals; portraits were a new way of depiction that was assimilated by the caciques as a way to negotiate their identity as intermediaries between the encomenderos and the tributary native population. Carolyn Dean described the contradictions contained in Inca portraiture as the interpretation between celebration of Indian heritage and submission to the Spanish.⁴⁹ The elite Inca used portraits made with a European composition, and with Inca attributes as a visual document that exalted their lineage to gain privileges from the Spanish crown.⁵⁰ The portable nature of canvas paintings created an influx of European depictions into the New World. There were production centers that fulfilled the demands of New Spain that flooded various cities, and shaped the art produced in the colonies.⁵¹ Portraiture became an important genre in the New World. Viceroy and people among the elite demanded works that were later fulfilled by local painters. The painters tried to mimic the styles that came from Europe, and among those painters we find Joaquín Gutiérrez, a portrait painter that worked in eighteenth-century Nueva Granada. He painted representations of various Viceroy, including Viceroy Manuel de Guirior (Figure 13).⁵² This painting has the Viceroy dressed in fine Spanish garments, gold embellishments, and a hat in his left hand. In the upper left

corner of the painting we find a coat of arms, which exalts his noble lineage. At the bottom part of the portrait there is a cartouche that contains text describing Viceroy Manuel de Guirior's position and function to Charles III, the King of Spain. The text in conjunction with the painted attributes highlighted the Viceroy's position as a naval officer and colonial representative. In addition to Viceroyal portraits, the practice of portraiture extended to native power. The portrait of Don Marcos Chihuan Topa (Figure 14), serves as an example of a household portrait that has the configuration of a traditional Spanish depiction, but at the same time has embedded native symbols to denote his lineage to a pre-conquest ruler.⁵³ Don Marcos Chihuan Topa is depicted in a Spanish garment made of fine lace. There are two coats of arms above each Virgin painting: one at the right related to the Spanish Hapsburgs, and the one at the left that is the family coat of arms. Like the Viceroy's depiction he also has a cartouche that contains in text his lineage connections. Teresa Gisbert sees the use of portraiture by the caciques as a way to create a historical record, a way to ensure their presence in memory.⁵⁴ The Sutatausa donor portraits are comparable to the depictions of the Viceroy Manuel de Guirior and Don Marcos Chihuan Topa. Sutatausa is about 53 miles away from Bogotá, which was the political and cultural center of Nueva Granada. The Caciques of Sutatausa probably had contact with portraits as the ones from the Viceroy Manuel de Guirior and understood the power of representation to establish an identity. The church of Sutatausa was the product of Indian town reductions.⁵⁵ They were a product of the need to concentrate the population to have greater control over them.⁵⁶ This generated power disputes among the encomenderos and the caciques. They saw the destruction of their Cacicazgos (area of power) and the need to create alliances.⁵⁷ The caciques were aware of the power that representation had for the Spanish, and also for

the tributary Muisca. The church of Sutatausa became the center of the town reduction of the area. This made the church of Sutatausa the ideal site to embody the power of the caciques. In order to achieve their objectives they had their image painted over segments of the existing mural program. The caciques did not see a problem with the partial overlap and incomplete destruction of the paintings. The visual tradition of overlapping may be closely related to the petroglyphs located throughout the Muisca area. The inscribed patterns on rocks was the nearest they had to painting depictions (Figure 2). The petroglyphs had depictions of figuration and textile patterns. The figures are positioned in a seemingly random order, and often overlap with others. This visual order can be compared to the modern process of copy and paste, in which overlapping objects appear detached from the overall picture. This detachment can be seen in the segmentation of the portrait, and the cacique attempted to mimic elements of portraits as the one of Don Marcos Chihuan Topa, but not the compositional order. This creates a disjunction that allows each element to stand on its own. The coat of arms and the saints have a closer connection with the church than with the caciques. There is a possibility that the caciques depicted in the church of Sutatausa did not have their own coat of arms, or an elaborate lineage, therefore they used religious insignia to portray their alliance to the Catholic Church and to the encomenderos. But besides the need of the cacique to display their assimilation of Christian doctrine, the cacique needed to connect with the regular Muisca people. They achieved this through the depiction of a Muisca women covered by a *manta* (shawl).

The Cacica

A portrait of a native noblewoman known as the *Cacica* (Figure 15) is located next to the cacique portrait at the left side of the church.⁵⁸ It is a unique depiction that offsets the balance of the church figures and provides a direct link to Muisca identity. The *Cacica* is depicted with her eyes closed and hands clasped holding a rosary in a prayer position. She wears a white European shirt held closed with a large gold pin that has a cross with a circle design at its top. These types of pins were used throughout the Andean territory to hold garments in place.⁵⁹ A Muisca shawl known as a *manta* covers the *Cacica*. The *manta* is a representative garment of the Muisca, which is embedded with Muisca meaning beyond its utilitarian function. Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins point out the instability of the body as representation, in which there is a reconfiguration of the indigenous body in a sacred space.⁶⁰ The *Cacica's manta* carries an embedded knowledge in its visual configuration. We will further examine the concealed meaning of the *manta* and how it becomes the center point of the mural program; however, at this point I will elaborate on the portraiture elements found in the *Cacica's* image.

The depiction of the *Cacica* is located at the lower part of a column that is part of the original mural program of the Passion of Christ. The *Cacica* is looking towards the next scene of Christ carrying the Cross (Appendix 1); she appears to be praying to the scene. Thus far there are no other murals depicting indigenous women in all of Colombia. However, we can find known examples in the Peruvian context of native noblewomen. The murals located at the Molino de Acomayo near Cuzco have a complete mural program made by Tadeo Escalante. The murals capture the Inca character in a Catholic society. Besides religious depictions, Escalante included a group of fourteen Inca monarchs, and three

Ñustas (Figure 16).⁶¹ According to Teresa Gisbert, these paintings are derived from an Inca tradition, which depicts the power lineage of Cuzco. It starts with Manco Capac as the founder, next to Mama Ocllo his wife, and accompanied by the Ñustas.⁶² The women wear fine Inca garments composed of dresses and shawls. This mural shows that Tadeo Escalante's intention was not to mimic Spanish painting, but to take control of the medium. The women are part of a political and spiritual insertion. Their bodies carry the Inca past; therefore their history would be preserved in a colonial space. These portraits were made as part of a complete mural program, which allowed continuity among the images. In Sutatausa the *Cacica's* portrait is a disjointed figure within the overall mural program. She appears to be painted in an accidental fashion that disregarded the visual continuity of the figures. What created an accidental feel was the *Cacica's* superimposed figure that cuts the background and the column in a bizarre fashion. Instead of erasing the column to create a realistic scene, the column was left hovering on top of the figure. The *Cacica* does not have a complementary background. The edges of the painting show signs of a disturbance created with the deletion of the column and the placement of the *Cacica's* painting. What we could consider a visual disregard for the perpetuation of the first mural program, could give us clues into the Muisca visual organization. We have to take into account that the Muisca did not have an established pictorial tradition other than the petroglyphs, and the now lost hand painted textiles.⁶³ After careful observation of petroglyph depictions (Figure 2)(Appendix 3), and in comparing the *Cacica*, I was able to establish visual connections. The delineated silhouette, the textile patterns, and the overlapping nature make the *Cacica's* portrayal a link to the petroglyph paintings. The outline of the *Cacica* has the shape of a large rock, and the *manta* mimics the textile patterns found on the rock. The portrait of the

Cacica was probably accepted in the church as part of the second mural program. In the eyes of the encomenderos and religious authorities, these portraits represented the conversion of the Muisca elite to Catholicism. Most of the native portraiture examples, the body of the *Cacica* was able to disguise Muisca cultural and religious traditions inside the church.

The Manta: Importance of Textiles in the Muisca Culture

The painting of the *Cacica* is part of the donor's portrait program (Figure 14). The *Cacica* is the only depiction of a person dressed in a distinctive Muisca garment. This garment has such visual elements as: the quality with which it was drawn, the color, and the design that makes it stand out among the other paintings of the church. The donor portraits represent the contention for power between the prominent elite groups of the local caciques and encomenderos. The *manta* is a symbol that exalts the Muisca nature of the donors. It stands as a representation beyond its textile depiction. The image worked as a mnemonic device that ignited memories from the Muisca culture. Therefore the formal and iconographic features of the *manta* set it apart from the other portrait figures.

Based on the visual contrast the *manta* has over the other figures of the mural, we must start with a formal description to be able to unlock its concealed meaning. Color has important meanings in different cultures. The *Cacica's* manta is black, and the designs are constructed from the negative space of the wall. The color contrasts with the lighter look of the overall mural program. Color in conjunction with the workmanship was used in the Muisca society for social distinction.⁶⁴ For example, a native priest in charge of the sun cult wore fine quality red mantas, and the ones in charge of the moon temple wore white; these were known as *chumbe*.⁶⁵ The native commoners wore mantas of raw cotton, without any

detail, of regular quality known as *chingomanales*.⁶⁶ Even though black is used in other images; the black of the *manta* has a different quality that gives it a woven attribute. If we compare the *manta* with the images of the petroglyphs (Figure 2), we find striking similarities in the technique. The pre-conquest Muisca used the negative space (non-painted areas) imprinted on the rocks to create the design. It was made with great attention to detail, which also gives the figure dimensionality next to flattened figures. The overall mural program was made with the intent of depicting Christian scenes, which are narrated in catechisms, and are used as an indoctrinating instrument.⁶⁷ These scenes have heavily delineated figures dressed in togas, and contemporary clothes with emphasis on the drapery and folds that look overall very awkward. The color and the detailed ornamentation contained in the *manta* have wide strips of rectangular shapes, as well as figurative patterns that embrace familiar pre-conquest techniques to depict the textile quality of the garment.

The survival of pre-conquest geometric patterns and techniques from the petroglyphs could provide us with further meanings. This additional connotation is connected in the history behind the *manta*, and also the Muisca perception of space. This relation between pattern and space can be seen in the overlapping nature of the second mural program, in which there is no concern over the defacement of scenes from the Passion of Christ. Due to the relationship of the *Cacica's manta* patterns with the pre-conquest concept of space, I deconstructed the *manta* in a direct visual comparison. I used shapes and figures from samples found at the Gold Museum in Bogotá, and also designs from petroglyphs found in the area of Sutatausa (Appendix 3).⁶⁸ The similarities of the petroglyphs and the *manta* designs display the important role textiles had in pre-conquest

Muisca culture, and how the *manta* was part of their cultural, religious, and economic identity.

The petroglyphs look at first as arbitrary depictions found over smoothed sides of large rocks. Through accounts of chronicles we can draw a mythological connection between the petroglyphs and textiles. Chroniclers wrote the mythological accounts they heard from the Muisca population. There is a thread of similar accounts about the Muisca's civilizing god named *Nemqueteba*, and Fra Pedro Simón wrote in 1882 about the story of his emergence:

All in this kingdom said that a man about 60 years old came to this area about twenty ages ago. He had long hair, and wore a tunic without neck tied with a pointed node on the shoulder. This was not part of the normal garments worn by the Muiscas, but from people from Perú. The Muiscas identified him as Chimizayagua, the messenger of their supreme god. Nemqueteba taught the Muiscas how to spin cotton, the weaving of mantas, and how to paint them. In case the Muiscas forget his teachings, he left painted samples of textiles on smooth, and polished rocks that can be seen throughout the Muisca territory.⁶⁹

There is another element connected with Muisca textiles that is present in the *Cacica's* manta design. There is a series of *torteros* (spindles) that have been found in the Muisca territory (Figure 17). Most of them are painted with figures similar to designs that can be found in textiles and other artifacts like ceramics (Figure 18). Gladys Tavera de Tellez and Carmen Urbina Caycedo, described these similarities as an intention to reflect the totality of their world, which was circular with a rhythmic sense of simple and doubled lines that form rectangles, triangles, and spirals.⁷⁰ The spindle is on the base of the textile tool, and it aids in the transformation of raw material into strands of cotton or wool, and therefore becomes an important element of the teachings of *Nemqueteba*. Spindles had been found inside important graves, in which the chiefs were buried with their slaves and

servants.⁷¹ This was part of his mythical civilizing mission to introduce the Muisca to the spindle. As a result, elements related with textiles had a religious connotation, and became part of their identity as Muisca. The Muisca did not have a clear division between their spiritual and everyday life. The way people dressed exhibited their religious and social status among their communities. Textiles were attached to a sense of being civilized, and of having an advanced position of knowledge among the people.

Cummins and Rappaport have studied the lack of literary representations among the Muisca cultures. They point to the importance of weaving as a possible type of writing, as the *quipu* was in Peru (Figure 19).⁷² The *quipu* was a record system used by the Incas. They knotted cords of cotton or other textile materials, in which each strand would have one or multiple knots that created a decimal system code. Scholars such as Gary Urton theorized about the possibility of the *quipu* as a method to register in-depth information, and there have been studies conducted.⁷³ In the chronicle of the myth of *Nemqueteba* by Fra Pedro Simón, he infers the possibility of a Peruvian (Inca) influence on the Muisca culture.⁷⁴ The Incas at the time had an advanced textile industry, and the mantas they made had imbedded status among their population. There is also a similar myth like that of the Muisca. A chronicler of Inca history called Juan de Betanzos describes their mythological origins from four men and four women that came out of a cave dressed in garments of fine wool and gold pins (*topos*) from a place called Pacarictambo.⁷⁵ The different registers of the Inca manta have designs that symbolized individual identities and cultural origins.

The Incas used their textiles as political leverage in the colonial period; it was a public demonstration of identity, loyalty, and status.⁷⁶ The convergence of symbols was part of the everyday life in the Peruvian colony. The House of Bourbon in Spain rose to

power in the eighteenth century and tightened control on their colonies, dismantling the Habsburg system. The changes angered the Inca population, and responded with violence in the Revolt of Tupac Amaru.⁷⁷ The response of the Spanish was the establishment of prohibitions that would ostracize the Inca identity. Amongst those measures they banned all portraits, performances, and garments associated with Inca heritage.⁷⁸ We can use the Peruvian case as a parallel of how the persistence of pre-conquest visual traditions were transformed into symbols of heritage that could jeopardize Spanish interests. The *manta* was symbol of heritage and symbols of tradition. It was part of an abrupt insertion into a European visual depiction that reinforces a cross-cultural exchange.⁷⁹ The *manta* is a way to insert Muisca mythological stories into an institution that wants the stories to fade away.

The *manta* not only had a cultural value, but also it was an intricate part of the Muisca economy. The significance of the *manta* in the Muisca culture created a high economic value, which added to the prestige of the wearer. Before the conquest, the Muisca traded textiles and spindles. In colonial times the *mantas* continued as a source of income, and also became part of the tribute paid to the Spanish crown by indigenous groups. Sandra Reina Mendoza provides a transcription of the testimony of Don Juan Quecantocho to an interrogation made by Miguel de Ybarra in 1594:

They weave in their homes because that is how they have done it since ancient times. It will be well that what it is appraised forward be in *mantas*, because of their dealings with textiles, and that the fruits of this land are corn, and beans having them in abundance for livelihood, and also to sell it and try to buy and sell salt and also in spun cotton, and sell skeins and make *mantas chingas* (bad quality) and barter them as good.⁸⁰

The testimony of the cacique Don Juan Quecantocho suggests that the *mantas* were more than just adornments. They were part of the economic system of Sutatausa in colonial times.

The manta depicted on the *Cacica* contains various elements of Muisca history in a colonial context. The mythological stories and the economic value of this garment represents the importance textiles had in their culture, and how it transcended the conquest by transforming it into a commodity desired by the encomenderos. The presence of the Muisca caciques can be read as a proof of their adaptation to Spanish power. The presence of the manta brings a different layer of meaning that inserts visual and religious Muisca content within Christian walls. Therefore the adaptation was not a complete turn away from their traditions, but of the search for ways to insert Muisca elements acceptable for the Spanish to maintain living pieces of the Muisca culture.

Overlap and Concealment

One of the visual strategies that the Muisca used as a seamless depiction of their culture was the recurrence of overlapping imagery. Throughout this analysis of the church of Sutatausa, we encounter multiple cases the palimpsest destruction of the mural program. This eventually ended with the mural paintings of the church completely covered over. Part of my argument places attention to these cases as conscious visual elements connected directly with pre-conquest Muisca pictorial arrangement. The configuration of the overlapping scenes is a response to the petroglyphs inspired by textile designs (Figure 2). The Muisca civilization had a different type of complexity in comparison with other pre-conquest cultures such as the Inca, the Maya or the Aztec. As I mentioned in the introduction the Muisca did not emphasize their power on monumental works; instead the Muisca focused their material culture on ephemeral materials like textiles and wooden structures.⁸¹ The petroglyphs underline the importance of textile practices. This imagery is connected to the Muisca myth, as I mentioned in previous chapters.

The importance of textiles went beyond the finished product. Cotton, the main source of textile, was also used as a representation of Muisca idols. Cotton had a protective function; it was used to wrap their metal offerings:

They exhibited four cotton idols ... they saw on each of them cotton and thread in which they are usually wrapped and tied their gold saints.⁸²

The petroglyphs have textile designs that covered the smooth surface. We can compare the designs imprinted on the rocks with the cotton used to wrap religious figures. Therefore the petroglyphs had twofold significance: they represent the material presence and the agency of textiles.

The church of Sutatausa's visual structure conveys elements contained in the petroglyphs; the Muisca that visited the church would recognize them. The patterns found on the *Cacica's* manta resemble the ones on the petroglyphs. As Graeme Were points out: "Pattern, through its inherent capacity to resemble other patterns, worked as a linking mechanism, carrying forward old ideas about genealogy, land, and memory."⁸³ The manta has the elements to carry pre-conquest ideas through the replication of existent patterns. Besides the direct presence of textiles on the manta, the placement and overlap of the figure in the second mural program also has a visual connection with the configurations found on the rocks. The Muisca used the negative space, combined with red cochineal pigments, to build the patterns on the rocks. The space was divided into rectangular shapes that are placed adjacent to each other, until they formed the appearance of a large textile. In these images, each of the rectangles appeared suspended in air; this effect is particularly apparent when the textile designs were placed next to other types of figures.

We can look at the second mural program as a response of the Muisca caciques to the European representation depicted in a Muisca language. They used portraiture as a way

to sustain their power despite the colonial setting of Sutatausa. Alfred Gell conveys that through material representation a network of social relations can be created, and this will pass the object agency to the donors.⁸⁴ The caciques tried to recreate an identity that adapted to Spanish and Muisca needs. They appropriated the agency contained in the textile configuration to maintain their position as intermediaries. The donors of the mural program were painted a few years later, after the first mural program of the Passion of Christ.⁸⁵ The donors made use of corners; the painted scenes already occupied part of that space. There is a difference in the painting style in these corners; combined with the imposition of the new figures created a disruption that could be seen at the edges of the paintings. This created an effect similar to the petroglyphs, specifically on the donor portraits and the *Cacica*. Their silhouette was emphasized by the lack of background designs. The wall of the church became part of the donors' portraits, which can be compared with the use of large rocks in the petroglyphs, giving the figures a relief appearance. The scene of the Last Judgment has a similar effect. The *totuma* is imposed upon a busy scene. This represented the Muisca tradition of the biohote. It is important to note these superimposed figures were directly connected to the Muisca people and objects. Gottfried Semper saw that the textiles' significance was contained in its symbols, which had multiple national, cultural, and religious contexts that are tied to the psychological demeanor of nations.⁸⁶ The *caciques* knew the Muisca visual context was based more on ideas than on specific elements. The placement of the figures incorporated Muisca ideas in the church, and they would understand the message of the caciques. Author Guillermo Muñoz sees the petroglyphs as a communication system based on a complex intellectual structure.⁸⁷ I'm not sure if the petroglyphs were an explicit method of communication as

we now see it. They could contain mnemonic ideas found in the textile pattern, as the petroglyphs brought ideas from their past. I do not think the petroglyphs can be seen as hieroglyphs, because it is not a specialized language that has alphabetic elements. The meaning embedded in textile work by the Muisca provides a different visual hierarchy, which went beyond its visual or utilitarian aspects.

The overlapping aspect of Muisca composition becomes contradictory to their goals when the entirety of the murals was covered under a 0.10-inch layer of plaster. There was not a full destruction of the murals, but an overlap of white paint. The murals were found by accident in 1994, while the church was undergoing a process of restoration.⁸⁸ There was no recollection of the existence of the murals. Most of the documents written during the colonial period about the church mention the need the territory had for a church of indoctrination. The demographics of the Muisca were changing, and there was a need to locate the population closer.⁸⁹ The lack of information created a mystery around the murals, and the reasons for their covering. I want to suggest here two possibilities based on historical events: first the rise of power of the Bourbon over Spain, and the decrease in Muisca population.

The Hapsburg King Charles II of Spain left as his heir Philip V, a member of the French House of Bourbon. Years of conflict resulted in the final succession of the Bourbons in Spain. The Bourbon Charles III (1759-1788) shifted his attention to the colonies after the succession was settled.⁹⁰ In these new policies, the Spanish increased fiscal demands, reduced American-born *criollos* from their administration, aligned with powerful merchants, and took away political and economic autonomy from the population.⁹¹ In Peru, the Bourbon measures resulted in a violent response by the native elite, artisans, and small

merchants lead by the cacique Tupac Amaru. They felt excluded; pressured by the Spanish government, they focused their revolt on nationalistic interests, and exalted their Inca heritage.⁹² They were violent; they terrorized the Spanish and their collaborators. The Spanish took control after a year and a half, and established harsher measures against the native Incas. The use of nationalistic native elements by the revolutionaries created a direct connection of native imagery with uprising. The Bourbon government established a series of prohibitions. Among them was the destruction of all Inca portraits.⁹³ These events had repercussions in the area of Nueva Granada. In a letter wrote to Phelipe de Salgar, in July 14th 1781, there is mention about the disagreement of a group of neighbors about the vicar, and the taxes they were being charged. The letter also mentions the death of Tupac Amaru a month prior.⁹⁴ The Tupac Amaru revolt inspired the creation of the *Comuneros* movement, which was a nationalistic organization in Nueva Granada, and a criollo majority composed it. There is a possibility that the anxieties from Peru moved the Spanish authorities in Nueva Granada to remove images that exalted nationalistic fervor, which included the exhibition of local Muisca elite such as the caciques. These images could have been seen as defiance to the Spanish rule, and were removed.⁹⁵

Another reason for the covering of the murals at the church of Sutatausa was the possible need to repurpose the church of Sutatausa after the demographic devastation of the Muisca population. They suffered from sickness brought by the Spanish and their slaves, as can be seen in messages send by magistrate Juan de Penagos in 1559. He reported about 40,000 deaths.⁹⁶ We have to be aware that early demographic data of the Muisca cannot be completely trusted; there were economical, and political interests of the encomenderos tied to the Muisca population numbers. The tributary allowances and

territory given to each of the encomenderos were tied to the number of Muisca people.⁹⁷ The following table has an approximation of the tributary Muisca of Sutatausa.⁹⁸ During the 16th and the 17th centuries the cacique power was decreased by the encomenderos. They had no more need of an intermediary with the Muisca; they were sent to reservations, and there was no more need for their labor. The Mestizo took over their tasks, and the power structure changed.⁹⁹

Year	Tributary Muisca	Year	Tributary Muisca
1560	368	1571-1572	265
1562	300	1600-1602	175-122
1634	100-47		

The data collected about the town of Sutatausa allows us to infer that the substitution of the Muisca population for mestizo changed the religious needs of Sutatausa. The portraits represented a lost past that became erased with plaster. The covering of the murals by the church of Sutatausa is a paradox. The overlapping composition of the murals commissioned by the Muisca cacique was created to perpetuate their memory, and connect to the Muisca contingencies. The church of Sutatausa covering of the mural program eliminated any the memory of their existence at Sutatausa.

Besides the possible causes of the murals' concealment, it is important to note that the murals were not scraped. They were there through time, and now fulfill their mission as a document that gives us a glimpse of the visual structure of the Muisca, the struggle for power, and most important of their active participation in the church not just as recipients of instruction, but also as givers of their own message.

Conclusion

The church of St. John the Baptist at Sutatausa can be seen as a valuable document of the contradictions that existed in the colonial period between the Muisca and the Spanish. The church started with an indoctrination mission to fulfill Spanish interests, but with the second mural program, the message became ambiguous. The Muisca donors appropriated Catholic imagery to create a parallel message of native power that would be understood by the rest of the Muisca population. It is important to note that they preserved some scenes of the original mural program (Passion of Christ) as it mirrors the Muisca journey of suffering at the hands of the Spanish. The second mural program was made as a historical document to memorialize the Muisca donors. Even though the murals were covered, hundreds of years later they continue to function as a memorial document, now that we know of the donors' existence. This mural also serves as a document to active economic and religious participation of the Muisca elite in the colonial period in Sutatausa. Before the Murals were found, historians such as Roberto Velandia dated the construction of the church ca. 1762.¹⁰⁰ The inscription at the scene of the Last Judgment has a partial date "16_", which tells us the church was constructed in the 17th century. Besides the perpetuation of memory the church of Sutatausa serves as a complete structure of indoctrinating practices and Muisca response. In order to understand this relationship, we have to see the church beyond its indoctrinating practices. After visiting the Town of Sutatausa it was clear to me that the petroglyphs provide evidence of the spatial visual construction of the Muisca, and how they adapted for the church.

The *Cacica* image has become the most popular character among the murals; the Muisca elements contained in the image create of an empathetic response than the other

characters. The cacique had an economic and political power that depended on the relationship between both Muisca and Spanish. As we can find in official documents such as wage disputes brought against the encomenderos by caciques, their relationship was anything but harmonious.¹⁰¹ The *Cacica* depiction served the caciques as an alternative body that was able to openly display Muisca elements without retribution. The *Cacica* depiction is charged with Muisca elements that can be compared with the adjacent petroglyphs in the area. The caciques were aware of the implications of “pagan” elements inside the church, and therefore mediated insertions of these elements were in plain sight. The *Cacica*’s manta became the salient element of the murals. The textile patterns, execution, and placement isolated the image making it the center of attention. The mythological connection I draw between the manta, and the petroglyphs could be seen as problematic due to its possible veracity. The myth of Nemqueteba is found in Spanish chronicles; it was part of the mythological memory of the Muisca in the colonial period. It is important to not take it at face value, but to break it down to find useful elements. In this case it highlights the importance of textiles beyond their practical use. The myth of Nemqueteba brings up a connection between the *Cacica* and the petroglyphs. The manta assumes a performative aspect, in which its decoration contains a piece of the Muisca social history.

The Spanish and Muisca clashed in the colonial era. As time passed and the indoctrination church was built, the cacique saw the church and the mural program as a way to preserve their power though their Muisca heritage and at the same time convert to Catholicism. We found similar types of depictions in the Inca context, as we saw in the portrait of Don Marcos Chihuan Topa, and the murals at Molino de Acomayo in Cuzco. The

Muisca people did convert, but at cost to the Spanish. The exchange was both a benefit and a drawback for both societies. The church of Sutatausa allows us to recognize that it was not a smooth transition. The Muisca did not accept Spanish power easily. The Muisca adaptation found at the church can be seen as a method of resistance that preserved their memory though time.

¹ Alvaro Chaves, Jorge Morales Gómez and Horacio Calle Restrepo, *Los Indios De Colombia* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992), 169-171.

² Ana María Boada Rivas, *La Evolución De Jerarquía Social En un Cacicazgo Muisca de Los Andes Septentrionales De Colombia*, Vol. no. 17 (Pittsburgh, Bogotá: University of Pittsburgh, Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2007), 10-11.

³ Ibid., 10-11.

⁴ Silvia Broadbent, *Investigaciones Arqueologicas En El Territorio Chibcha* (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 1965), 32.

⁵ Subdirección de Monumentos Nacionales, Instituto Nacional de Vías (Colombia), *Restauración Del Conjunto Doctrinero De San Juan Bautista: Sutatausa, Cundinamarca, Colombia*. (Bogotá: Grafivisión Editores Ltda., 1998). Vallín focused his study on the murals, without mention of the petroglyphs.

⁶ Muisca territory was organized in large political units; they were organized around a hierarchical political organization, lead by a Cacique.

⁷ Roberto Velandia, *Enciclopedia Histórica De Cundinamarca* (Bogotá: Coopnalgráficas, 1979-1982), 2228.

⁸ Juan Friede, *Documentos Inéditos Para La Historia De Colombia* (Bogotá: Academia de Historia, 1960), 122-125. Excerpts from a statement made by Jeronimo Lebron, denouncing Juan Arevalo (March 30, 1541)

⁹ It is important to note that the use of the word *syncretism* can be problematic due to the implications embedded on it. Carolyn Dean and Dana Leisbsohn, "Hybridity and its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003), 13. I used the word *syncretism* as a union of different cultures, without disavowing the Indigenous, or Spanish cultures.

¹⁰ Friede, *Documentos Inéditos*, 170.

¹¹ Sandra Reina Mendoza, *Traza Urbana y Arquitectura en Los Pueblos De Indios Del Altiplano Cundiboyacense: Siglo XVI a XVIII, El Caso De Bojacá, Sutatausa, Tausa y Cucaita* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Sede Bogotá, 2008), 37.

¹² Jaime Lara, *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 189-190.

¹³ Diego Valadés and Tarsicio Herrera Zapién, *Retórica Cristiana* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma De México, Fondo De Cultura Económica, 1989), 233-235.

¹⁴ John McAndrew, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965), 340.

- ¹⁵ Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley, *The Oxford History of Mexico*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 144-146.
- ¹⁶ Valadés and Herrera Zapién, *Retórica Cristiana*, 231.
- ¹⁷ Silvia Arango, *Historia De La Arquitectura En Colombia* (Bogotá: Centro Editorial Y Facultad De Artes, Universidad Nacional De Colombia, 1989), 60.
- ¹⁸ Manuel González Galván and Martha Fernández, *Trazo, Proporción Y Símbolo En El Arte Virreinal: Antología Personal* (México, D.F: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2006), 7.
- ¹⁹ Ana María Gómez Londoño, *Muisca: Representaciones, Cartografías Y Etnopolíticas De La Memoria* (Bogotá: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2005), 163.
- ²⁰ Lara, *City, Temple*, 190-191.
- ²¹ Gómez Londoño, *Muisca: Representaciones*, 165.
- Muisca Deity Fapqua is represented with corn and yucca, the wafer is made out of wheat, and wine can be compared with *Chicha* alcoholic drink.
- ²² Arango, *Historia De La Arquitectura*, 62.
- ²³ The Murals at the church of Sutatausa were covered with plaster. I will address the story, and its implications over the knowledge of the church.
- ²⁴ The person in-charge of the parish told me that she was there when the objects found at the small chamber were taken, during the restoration of the church.
- ²⁵ I believe that the torture chamber's presence and position demonstrates the resistance of the native Muisca population of Sutatausa. It was not enough to depict the suffering of Christ; the Muisca had to suffer if they did not adapt to the new religious practices.
- ²⁶ Friede, *Documentos Inéditos*, 170.
- ²⁷ Reina Mendoza, *Traza Urbana*, 147.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 83.
- ²⁹ Appendix. Schematic map of the mural program inside the church St. John the Baptist at Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.
- ³⁰ Valadés and Herrera Zapién, *Retórica Cristiana*.
- ³¹ Rodolfo Vallín, *Imágenes Bajo Cal Y Pañete: Pintura Mural De La Colonia En Colombia* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1998), 139.
- ³² This scene has a window, but the images were restored.
- ³³ Vallín, *Restauración Del Conjunto Doctrinero*.
- ³⁴ This scene is heavily damaged throughout the middle. The images that were restored allow study of the important figures in the mural scenes.
- ³⁵ This possibility would match the context of the Last Judgment; to the left of Christ we find the damned.
- ³⁶ Vallín, *Imágenes Bajo Cal Y Pañete*, 84. Vallín also identifies the sinners next to the Mouth of Hell as Spanish figures.
- ³⁷ Joanne Rappaport and Thomas Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes* (Durham: Duke UP, 2012), 137.
- ³⁸ Gómez Londoño, *Muisca: Representaciones*, 158-164.
- ³⁹ Lara, *City, Temple*, 75-76.
- ⁴⁰ Velandia, *Enciclopedia Histórica*, 2237. Velandia dated the church construction on 1762.
- ⁴¹ Carlos Martínez, *Apuntes Sobre El Urbanismo En El Nuevo Reino De Granada*. (Bogotá: Tall. Gráf. del Banco de la República, 1967).

- ⁴² Gordon Campbell, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005).
- ⁴³ Laura Jacobus, *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: Art, Architecture & Experience* (London: Harvey Miller, 2008).
- ⁴⁴ Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City*, 95.
- ⁴⁵ Tom Cummins, Kenneth Andrien and Rolena Adorno, *Transatlantic Encounters: Europeans and Andeans in the Sixteenth Century*. Kenneth Andrien and Rolena Adorno (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 209-211.
- ⁴⁶ Annette Sandoval, *The Directory of Saints: A Concise Guide to Patron Saints* (New York: Dutton, 1996), 76.
- ⁴⁷ The breaking wheel was a torture wheel used to break the bones of the accused.
- ⁴⁸ Sandoval, *The Directory of Saints*, 177, 186.
- ⁴⁹ Carolyn Dean, *Inka Nobles: Portraiture and Paradox in Colonial Peru* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2005), 81.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 82.
- ⁵¹ Miguel Bretos, "From Prehispanic to Post-Romantic: Latin America in Portraits, 500 B.C.-A.D. 1910," in *Retratos: 2,000 Years of Latin American Portraits*, ed. Elizabeth Benson (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum of Art, 2004), 33.
- ⁵² Fernando Restrepo Uribe, "Joaquin Gutierrez El "Pintor De Los Virreyes": Expresión Del Estilo Rococó En La Nueva Granada," *Revista Credencial Historia* 138 (June 2001, 2001), 2 April 2014.
- ⁵³ Dean, *Inka Nobles*, 88.
- ⁵⁴ Teresa Gisbert, *Iconografía Y Mitos Indígenas En El Arte* (La Paz: Gisbert, 1980), 96.
- ⁵⁵ Indian reductions were places in which the indigenous people were forced to relocate, to consolidate the population, and have more land to distribute.
- ⁵⁶ Reina Mendoza, *Traza Urbana*, 11.
- ⁵⁷ Alejandro Bernal, Jorge Gamboa and Martha Herrera, *Los Muisca En Los Siglos XVI Y XVII: Miradas Desde La Arqueología, La Antropología Y La Historia*, ed. Jorge Augusto Gamboa M (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2008), 126.
- ⁵⁸ On my visit to Sutatausa I had the opportunity to talk to the local population. They witnessed the discovery of the murals and refer to this particular work as the *Cacica*. There is the possibility of that she was a *Cacica* in her own right, or the wife of one of the donors.
- ⁵⁹ Sabine MacCormack, "Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru," (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1991), 74.
- ⁶⁰ Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City*, 220.
- ⁶¹ Ñustas were Inca princesses.
- ⁶² Gisbert, *Iconografía Y Mitos*, 172-173.
- ⁶³ Until now there is no evidence of sculpture, or painting. Archeological finds show the use of geometric patterns in ceramics, and textiles. Depictions are found on the petroglyphs found in caves, and surrounding areas. The Muisca worked extensively in the handcraft of gold artifacts.
- ⁶⁴ Gladys Tavera de Tellez and Carmen Urbina Caycedo, *Textiles De Las Culturas Muisca Y Guane*, 1 ed ed. (Quito, Ecuador: Universidad de los Andes, 1994).
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., 7-13
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 7-13

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- ⁶⁷ Héctor Llanos Vargas, *En El Nombre Del Padre, Del Hijo Y El Espíritu Santo: Adoctrinamiento De Indígenas Y Religiosidades Populares En El Nuevo Reino De Granada (Siglos XVI-XVIII)* (Bogotá: Héctor Llanos Vargas, 2007), 35.
- ⁶⁸ In my visit to Sutatausa I was able to draw connections between the manta of the *Cacica*, and the local petroglyphs due to their proximity to the church. I deconstructed the manta to allow the reader to create a visual parallel that otherwise might be lost in the overall image.
- ⁶⁹ Eugenia Villa Posse, *Mitos Y Leyendas De Colombia: Selección De Textos* (Quito: Ediciones IADAP, 1991), 132-134.
- ⁷⁰ Tavera de Tellez and Urbina Caycedo, *Textiles De Las Culturas Muisca*.
- ⁷¹ José Pérez de Barradas, *Los Muiscas Antes De La Conquista*. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Bernardino de Sahagún, 1950), 141-142.
- ⁷² Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City*, 249.
- ⁷³ Gary Urton and Carrie Brezine, "Khipu Database Project," <http://khipumayuq.fas.harvard.edu/WhatIsAKhipu.html> (accessed March 10, 2014).
- ⁷⁴ Villa Posse, *Mitos Y Leyendas*, 130.
- ⁷⁵ Elena Phipps, Johanna Hecht and Cristina Esteras Martín, *The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530-1830* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 18. Story from *Suma y narración de los yngas* by Juan de Betanzos, 1576.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 27-31.
- ⁷⁷ Charles Walker, *Smoldering Ashes: Cuzco and the Creation of Republican Peru, 1780-1840*. (Durham: Duke UP, 1999), 22-23.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 33-34.
- ⁷⁹ Graeme Were, *Lines that Connect: Rethinking Pattern and Mind in the Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2010), 7.
- ⁸⁰ Reina Mendoza, *Traza Urbana*, 65. (Taken from the A.G.N. V.B. t. 17 f.303 y 322)
- ⁸¹ Broadbent, *Investigaciones Arqueologicas*, 32.
- ⁸² Eduardo Londoño, *Santuarios, Santillos Y Tunjos. Objetos Votivosde Los Muiscas En El Siglo XVI* (Bogotá: Boletín Museo del Oro. No. 25, 1989), 111. Tunja 1577. AGN Real Hda: 21: 785v-786r.
- ⁸³ Were, *Lines that Connect*, 152.
- ⁸⁴ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 33.
- ⁸⁵ Vallín, *Restauración Del Conjunto Doctrinero*.
- ⁸⁶ Gottfried Semper, *Style: Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts, Or, Practical Aesthetics* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004), 36.
- ⁸⁷ Guillermo C. Muñoz and Donna Gillette, *Rock Art and Sacred Landscapes* (New York: Springer, 2013), 233.
- ⁸⁸ Vallín, *Restauración Del Conjunto Doctrinero*.
- ⁸⁹ Reina Mendoza, *Traza Urbana*, 65.
- ⁹⁰ Walker, *Smoldering Ashes*: 32-33.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., 35.
- ⁹² Ibid., 26-27.
- ⁹³ Ibid., 33.
- ⁹⁴ *Carta De Vecinos Sobre Inconformidad Respecto Al Provisor, En La Que Se Da Noticia Sobre La Captura De Tupac Amaru, 1781*, Manuscript.

⁹⁵ There is no complete literature about specific effects of the Tupac Amaru revolt in the Nueva Granada. I draw the possibility from the available information.

⁹⁶ AGI, *Sevilla Audiencia De Santa Fe*, 188, *Carta De Juan De Penagos*, Fol. 226r, 1559).

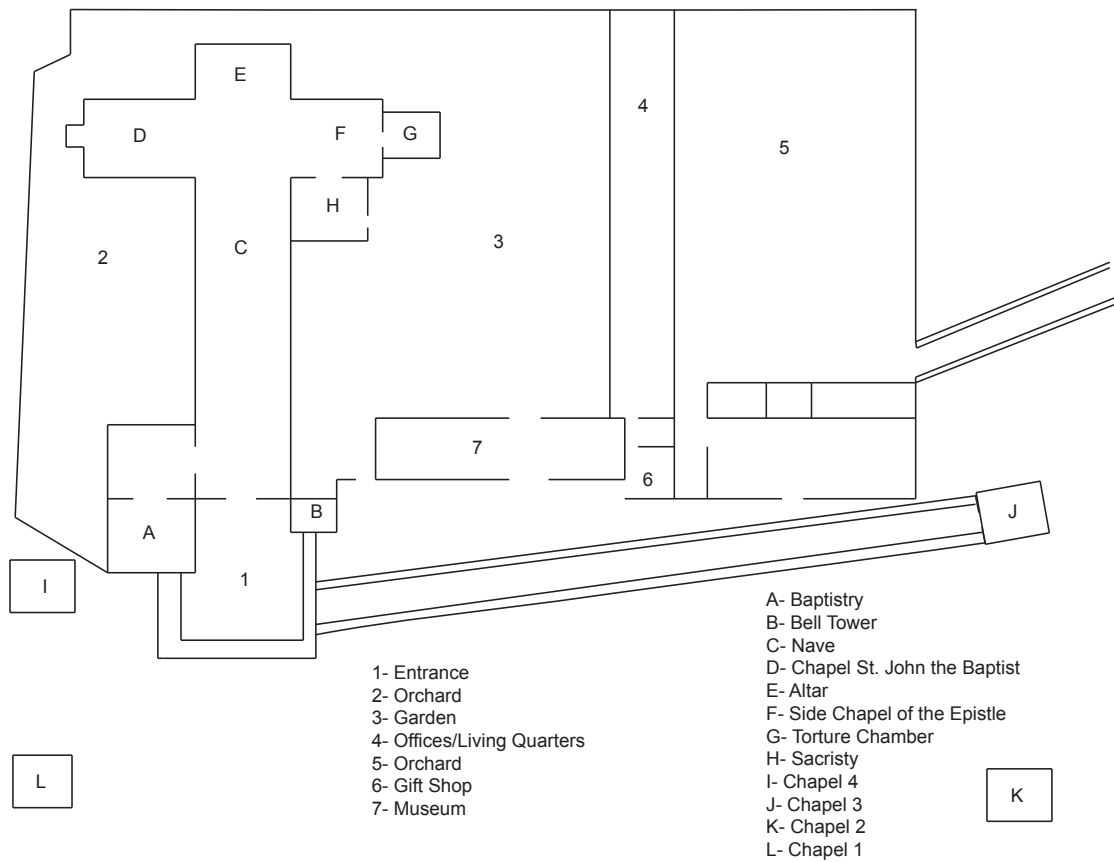
⁹⁷ Francis and Gómez Londoño, *Muisca: Representaciones*, 86-87.

⁹⁸ AGI, *Sevilla, Visitas De Boyacá*, 30, Exp 11; AGN, *Bogotá, Caciques E Indios*, 70, Nos. 11,19.

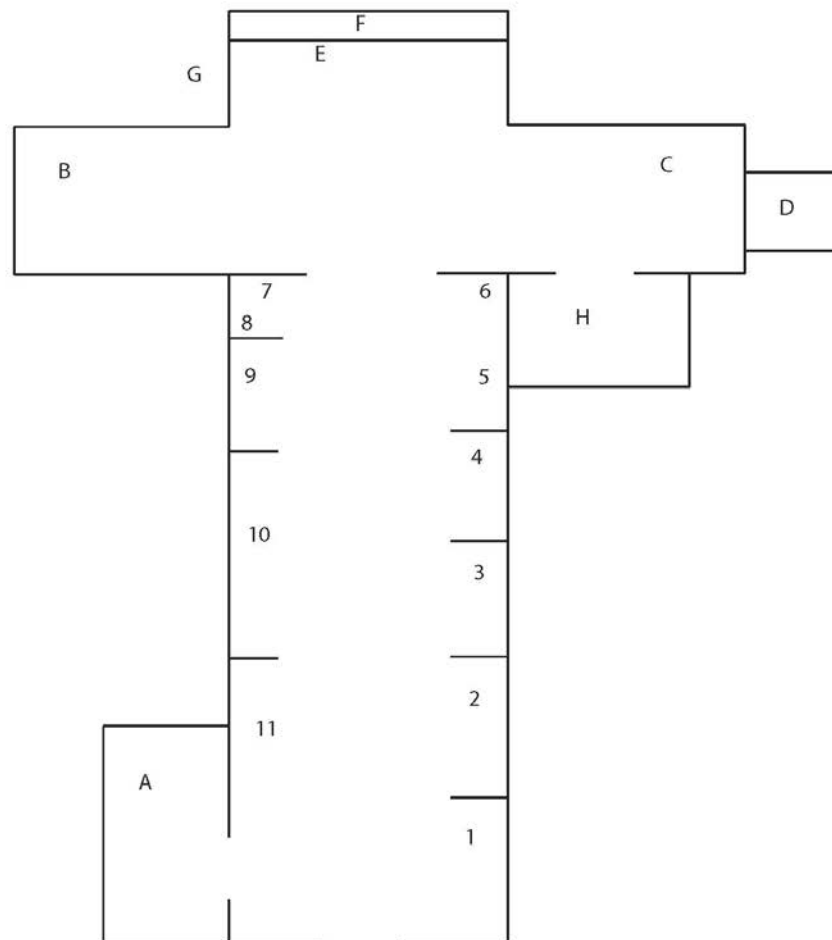
⁹⁹ Gamboa, Gómez Londoño, *Muisca: Representaciones*, 62-63.

¹⁰⁰ Velandia, *Enciclopedia Histórica*, 2227.

¹⁰¹ AGN, *Encomenderos, Reclamo De Salarios De Los Caciques De Suta Y Tausa*, Fol. 67, 1587).



Appendix 1.



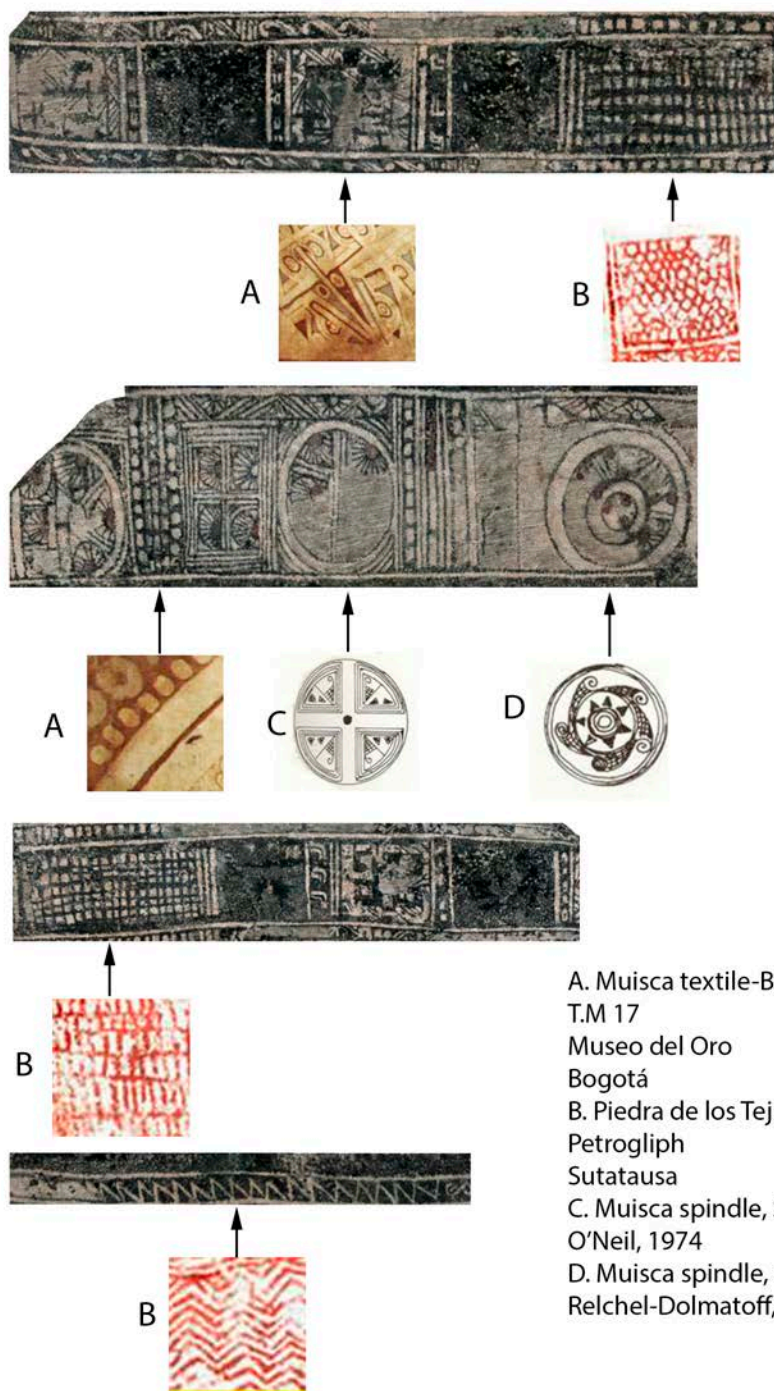
Mural

1. Last Supper
2. Jesus Praying at Mount of Olives
3. The Flagellation (now a window)
4. The Mocking of Christ
5. Presentation of Christ
6. Cacique, Santa Ursula
7. Caped Cacique, Santa Catalina
8. La Cacica
9. Christ Carrying the Cross
10. Crucifixion of Christ
11. Last Judgment

Chapels

- A. baptistry (Murals)
- B. Chapel St. John the Baptist
- C. Side Chapel of the Epistle
- D. Torture Chamber
- E. Presbystery (Retablo)
- F. Back Mural
- G. Santa Clara
- H. Sacristy

Appendix 2.



A. Muisca textile-Boyaca,
T.M 17
Museo del Oro
Bogotá
B. Piedra de los Tejidos
Petroglyph
Sutatausa
C. Muisca spindle, Suba
O'Neil, 1974
D. Muisca spindle, Soacha
Relchel-Dolmatoff, 1943

Appendix 3

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- Figure 19** Unknown, *Khipu* from Sierra Sur. Cotton fiber. 1300-1532 CE. Museo Larco, Lima.



Figure 1 Unknown, *Iglesia de San Juan Bautista*. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.



Figure 2 Unknown, Muisca, *Piedra del Cementerio*. Petroglyph, natural pigments. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.

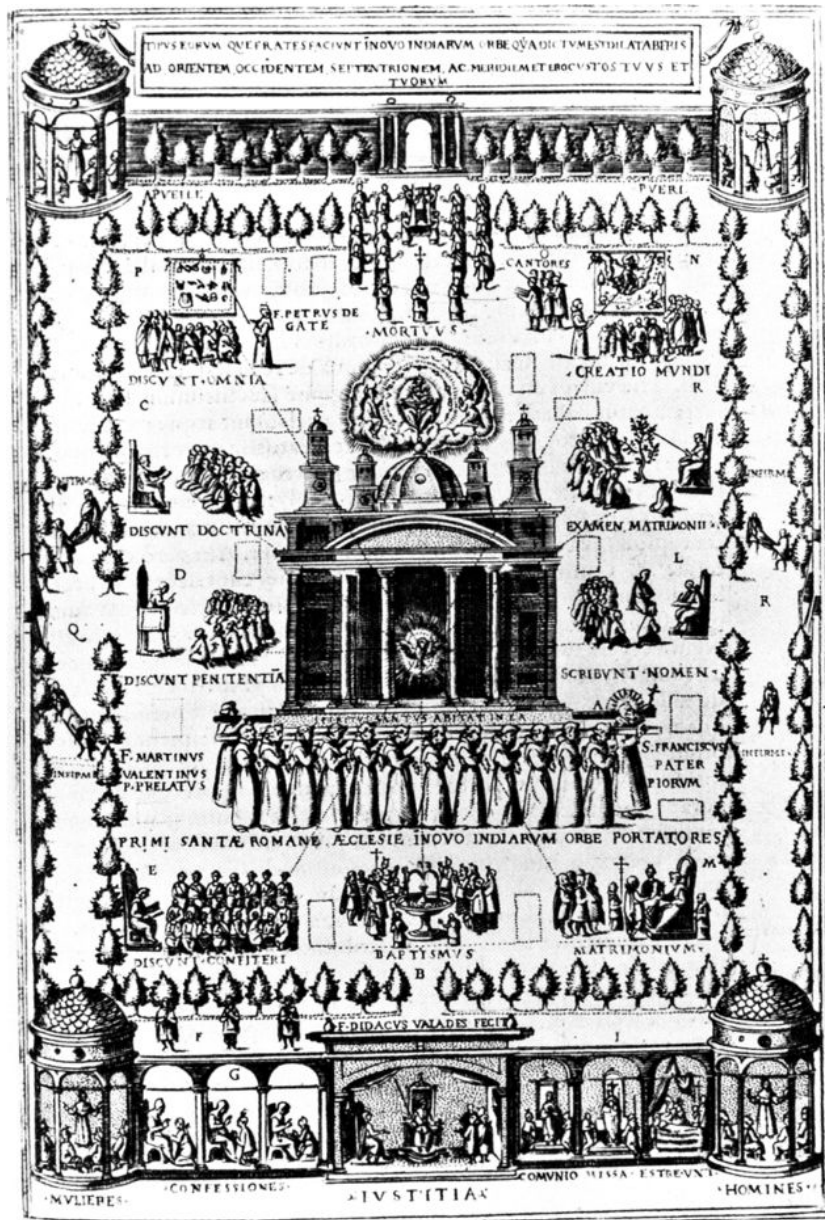


Figure 3 Diego Valades, *Rhetorica Christiana*, 1579.



Figure 4 Unknown, *Torture Chamber*. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.



Figure 5 Unknown, *The Last Judgment*. Natural pigments. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.

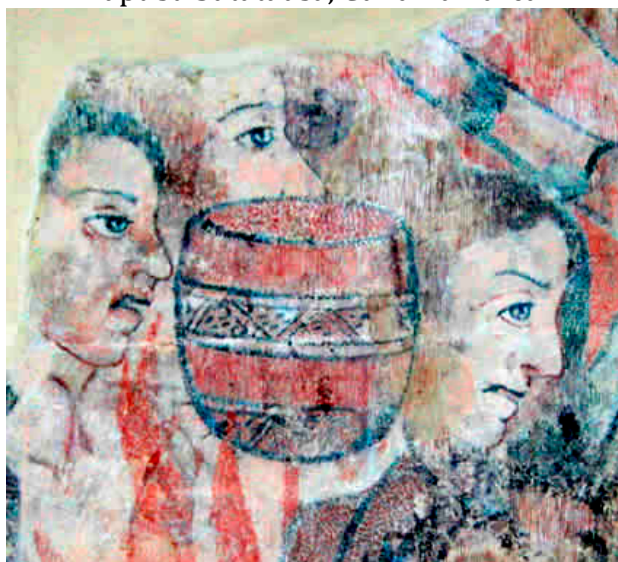


Figure 5.1 Unknown, *Totuma*. Natural pigments. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.



Figure 6 Unknown, *Last Supper, and Jesus Praying at Mount of Olives*. Natural pigments. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.

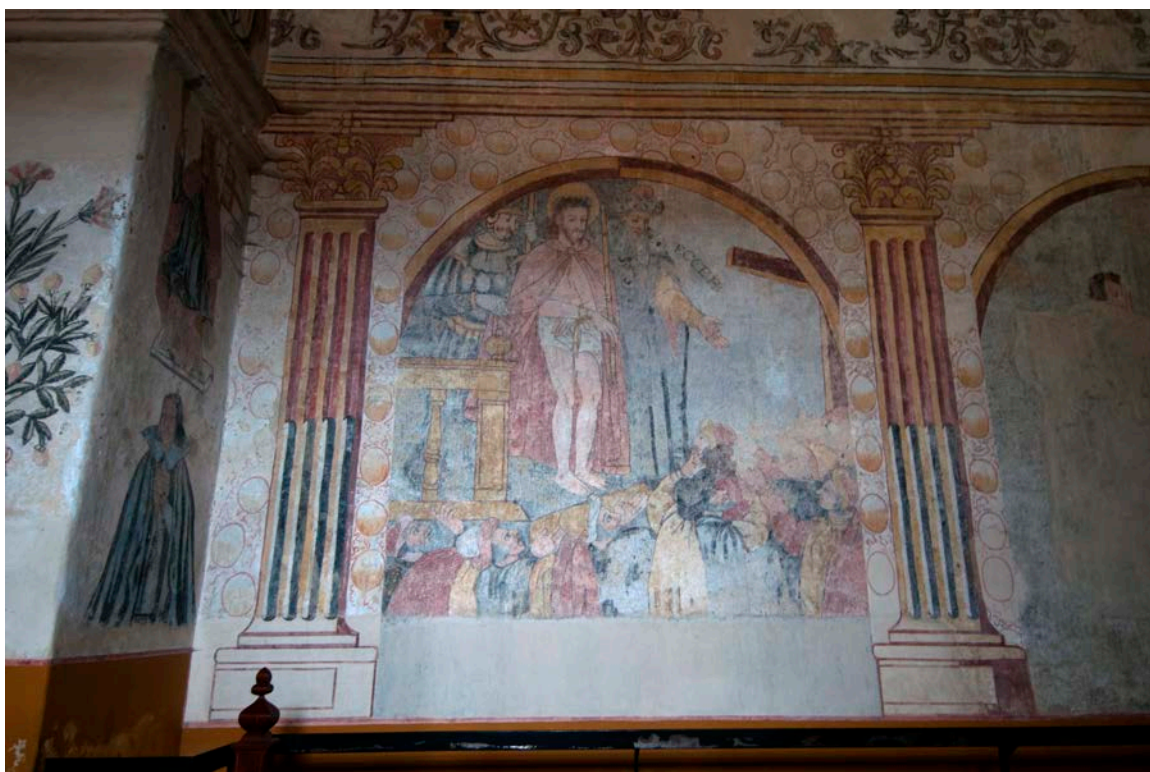


Figure 7 Unknown, *ECCE HOMO*. Natural pigments. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.



Figure 8 Unknown, *The Last Judgment. Donors Inscription*. Natural pigments. c.1600s.
Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.



Figure

9 Unknown, Indian Man and Woman Tempted to Drunkenness. 16th Century. Santa María Xoxoteco. Hidalgo, Mexico.



Figure 10 Unknown, *Cacique, Santa Ursula*. Natural pigments. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.



Figure 11 Unknown, *Cacique, Santa Catalina*. Natural pigments. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.



Figure 12 Giotto, *Arena Chapel, Offering* (Detail). c.1305-1306. Fresco. Padua.



Figure 13 Joaquín Gutiérrez, *Virrey Manuel de Guirior*. Oil on Canvas. 18th century. *Museo de Arte Colonial, Bogotá, Colombia.*



Figure 14 Unknown. *Don Marcos Chiquathopa*, ca. 1740-45. Museo Inka, Cuzco, Peru.



Figure 15 Unknown, *La Cacica*. Natural pigments. c.1600s. Church of St. John the Baptist. Sutatausa, Cundinamarca.



Figure 16 Tadeo Escalante. *Mama Huaco and Mama Occllo*. 18th century. Molino de Acomayo, Cuzco, Peru.



Figure 17 Unknown, *Tortero Muisca*. Ceramic. Pre-conquest. Cundinamarca.



Figure 18 Unknown. *Ceramic Cup*. Clay. 600-1600 CE. H: 13,5x18,5 cm. Museo del Oro, Bogotá.



Figure 19 Unknown, *Khipu* from Sierra Sur. Cotton fiber. 1300-1532 CE. Museo Larco, Lima.