Colonial Masca in motion: tactics of persistence of a Honduran indigenous community

Sheptak, R.N.

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Author: Sheptak, Russell Nicholas
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Chapter 3: Re-reading the Documentary Record of Spanish Colonialism

By the time of the first colonization attempt by Hernan Cortes in Honduras, the native populations had already experienced at least 22 years of sporadic and largely undocumented interchanges with Europeans. Before we can shift the focus to teasing out the indigenous experience from colonial sources, it is critical to review what is often presented as the normal history of colonization, which emphasizes the actions of the Spanish while presenting indigenous people as passive objects of action. Even here, I will show, it is possible to begin to re-read the traditional historiography and move toward an account that treats indigenous people as participants in events, not merely the objects of the actions of others.

Spanish *Entradas* and Early Settlement in Northern Honduras

The first contact between Europeans and native peoples of Honduras documented in European texts happened in 1502 when Columbus came upon a canoe that appeared to be going from the island of Guanaja to the mainland of Honduras (Edwards 1978). Columbus pressed the occupants of this canoe, who he and others on his ship identified as traders, into guiding him to the mainland before letting them leave.

Between 1502 and 1524 there were continuing, supposedly limited, contacts with the native peoples of the north coast of Honduras by Spanish groups from Nicaragua and Guatemala (by 1523) and El Salvador (by 1523). Substantial, documented, yet unauthorized ship traffic landed in Honduran ports after 1524. It is likely that the stretch of coast along northern Honduras was used by other ships undocumented in archival sources throughout the early decades of the sixteenth century.

In 1524, for example, Cortes (1989:391) started to build a ship from parts of shipwrecks washed up around Nito, west along the Caribbean coast (Figure 1):

> I had already made great haste to repair a caravel which the Spaniards in Nito had allowed to fall into pieces, and had also begun to build a brigantine from the remains of others which had been wrecked thereabouts.

Cortes (1989:391) writes in his fifth letter about the unexpected visit of a ship loaded with provisions: "Our Lord God...sent thither a ship from the islands, not in the least expecting to find me there". That ship contained

potential colonists and provisions. Cortes bought the provisions, and the ship.

It was not until twenty years after Columbus first stopped in Honduras that a serious Spanish attempt was made to colonize northern Honduras. This came with the arrival of Cristobal d'Olid and a group of 300 Spaniards, sent by Cortés from Mexico in 1523 to "conquer and pacify" Honduras in his name (Chamberlain 1953). Olid set out from Vera Cruz, Mexico with five ships, several hundred Spaniards, and indigenous allies from Mexico. These ships were wrecked in storms along the north coast of Honduras. Survivors landed at sites where colonial Puerto Caballos and Triunfo de la Cruz would be founded (Figure 1). They established their main settlement at Trujillo, far east along the coast. There Olid claimed the new Honduran colony for himself.

In response, Cortes sent a relative, Francisco de las Casas, to take over from Olid. Las Casas, in turn, was shipwrecked and captured by Olid. In Mexico, Cortes heard about the shipwreck and capture of las Casas. As a result, in 1524 he started his famous march overland from Mexico to Honduras. By this time Olid had divided his forces between Triunfo de la Cruz and the indigenous town of Naco, located on a tributary of the Chamelecon River, west of the Ulúa Valley (Figure 1). When Cortés arrived near the mouth of the Motagua river, at the indigenous town of Nito, he sent some of his forces, including Bernal Diaz, up the Motagua and overland to Naco, while he continued along the coast. There, in 1524, Cortes founded the town of La Natividad de Nuestra Señora, with twenty Spaniards, some of them relocated from Olid's Naco group (Cortes 1990). La Natividad was apparently located along the south shore of the Laguna Alvarado near modern Puerto Cortes, in the colonial period, Puerto de Caballos.

At the same time, Cortes sent an expedition inland from Puerto Caballos to near Choloma, in the lower Ulúa River valley (Cortes 1990: 347-351). This is the first specific report of Spanish interaction with indigenous people in the area that is the focus of this study. Here his lieutenants met with unnamed native leaders and, Cortes claims, successfully explained his peaceful intent to them. The native participants in this meeting gave Cortes gifts, and he departed.

From Puerto Caballos, Cortes then sailed to Trujillo, to the east along the coast, a location known from reconnaissance carried out by the Olid group. He spent about six months establishing the political and social order among the Spanish required to support his claim to the colony under Spanish law, writing a founding document for a city at Trujillo (Cortes 1990). He reports meeting with local indigenous leaders from whom he obtained food

and some labor. After only six months in Honduras, Cortés was called back to Mexico in 1525, leaving Trujillo as the main Spanish settlement.

Leadership of the Honduran colony eventually fell to Andrés de Cereceda, who in 1523 had been exiled from Nicaragua and joined the Honduran colonists (Chamberlain 1953). Pedrarias Davila, in Nicaragua, had tried to annex Honduras for himself, and sent numerous expeditions into the eastern Honduran province of Olancho to mine for gold in the 1520s, enslaving the native population. Andres de Cereceda fell out with Pedrarias Davila was exiled to Honduras.

Cereceda became treasurer (*contador*) of the Honduran colony in 1526, and then acting governor of the colony as the appointed governor died days after arriving in Trujillo. By 1533 Cereceda had moved a large portion of his colonists away from Trujillo to a spot west of Naco, four leagues to the east of the indigenous town of Quimistan, where placer gold deposits had been reported. Here he founded a new town, Santa Maria de Buena Esperanza (1535 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 4). This brought the colony into direct confrontation with a named indigenous leader based in the Ulúa River valley, Çocamba.

By 1535, facing rebellion from Spanish settlers who were lured by rumors of the discovery of gold in Peru, Cereceda wrote to Pedro de Alvarado, in nearby Guatemala, offering to share governance of Honduras in return for military help (Chamberlain 1953). Alvarado had been given a Royal patent to conquer and pacify Honduras in 1532, but had not acted on it. It wasn't until December 1535 that Alvarado arrived in Honduras. Over the next several months he engaged in campaigns in Comayagua and the valleys west of the Ulúa River valley. In late June 1536, he took on the Ulúa valley and its cacique, Çocamba. Alvarado founded the cities of San Pedro, Puerto Caballos, and Gracias a Dios, and issued two documents assigning the labor of indigenous towns to Spanish participants in his campaign, one for the northern area under the jurisdiction of San Pedro, the other for the southern area to be administered from Gracias a Dios.

Rethinking the Conventional Narrative of "Conquest"

This outline of events is the conventional story of the "conquest" of Honduras (e.g. Chamberlain 1953). However, it accepts a number of interpretations made by Spanish participants without examining how they could have understood the indigenous actions they reported, nor does it consider what the indigenous participants in events understood about them. I employ the dialogics of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) as a way to begin to see

these events as involving two sets of actors, not simply Spanish agents acting on reactive indigenous objects of conquest. Bakhtin's core concept of *dialogue* is based on the idea that every utterance (whether oral or written) is formed in anticipation of a response from another (the addressee), and in conformity with what he calls a "super-addressee": "Language lives only in the dialogic interaction of those who make use of it" (Bakhtin 1984: 183). From the perspective of dialogics, every text is full of sideways glances at others. Nor is this perspective limited to utterances, spoken words or written texts. Like utterances, actions are dialogic. One undertakes a series of actions with an expected response, in light of similar experience from one's past. These actions take into account one's previous experience with past actors in similar situations, and the expected responses are conditioned by past outcomes.

Andrew Wiget (1991), a folklorist with a background in literary criticism, advocated using a process of "reading against the grain" (a reference to Benjamin 1968 [1940]) to examine similar issues in native North American and western traditions. He noted that in dealing with non-western texts it becomes clear how much we depend on fundamental assumptions to understand European texts, and suggests that for such texts we need to look for clues about the fundamental assumptions of both the writers and actors. Other scholars have used such methods of "reading against the grain" to tease information about indigenous experience and perspectives from Spanish colonial documents in Mexico (Clendinnen 1982; Hanks 1986; Tedlock 1993).

While dialogics provides one methodological tool for this process of re-reading, also critical to this process is the concept of doxa, from the work of the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (Myles 2004), especially as it has entered anthropological archaeology through the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1977:166) describes doxa as the unconscious, unquestioned commonsense forms of knowledge particular to one society and even to one social class or faction. Doxa is shared by members of a social group or segment and enacted in practices that are taken as natural and unquestioned. Bourdieu (1977:72-78) calls this internalization of doxa, achieved through practice, habitus. Sometimes doxa becomes subject to conscious reflection, and may break down (Bourdieu 1977:168).

For Bourdieu the transition from doxa to reflexivity is brought about either by radical social structure change, such as culture contact, or through adopting the doxa of a superior reference group. Doxa, for Bourdieu, limits the boundaries of othodoxy and heterodoxy. Myles (2004:91) argues that Bourdieu's reading of Husserl over polarizes doxa and reflexivity. Bourdieu,

he argues, treats the transition from doxa to orthodoxy as a move from practical action to discourse. This necessarily separates language from its embodiment, an argument most phenomenologists would reject. Myles suggests that Husserl argues for a more nuanced doxa, identifying a number of intervening states of consciousness (including judgment and predictiveness). He shows that Husserl argues that doxa is an unreflexive state only where perception is unmotivated by experience that is immediate or mediated by cultural objects. Husserl defines a proto-doxa that is a passive pre-living consciousness of objects. Doxa, in contrast is the "natural attitude" commonsense that we act on when objects within the perceptual field are taken as given and negotiated by a practical sense (Myles 2004: 99).

When doxa moves from the realm of the unconscious to the conscious, it takes new forms, which Bourdieu (1977: 164-171) labels orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Orthodoxy is when formerly doxic practices come to be consciously recognized as subject to choice and are reiterated. Heterodoxy is when, under the same level of consciousness and choice, innovative, non-doxic practices result. In theory, doxa could never be articulated by an actor, since it would be unquestioned and taken for granted, naturalized. Yet Barry Smith (1995:401) notes that doxa itself, as conceived by Husserl, is already not "naive, it is fully conscious of the distinction between the way things are and the way things appear to be". Smith describes an unceasing process of reciprocal adjustment. Proto-doxa, Husserl's passive pre-living consciousness of objects, is not subject to repositioning (orthodoxy/heterodoxy) by changing circumstances and thus is not confronted in situations of culture contact. For Husserl, doxa is more like Bourdieu's orthodoxy, resulting from a manifold awareness of objects in embodied experience.

In trying to bridge Bakhtin's and Bourdieu's approaches, Burkitt (1998) uses Voloshinov's concept of a society's behavioral ideology, the unsystematized and unfixed inner and outer speech which endows our every instance of behavior and action and our every conscious state with meaning (Voloshinov 1986: 91) as an analogue to Bourdieu's doxa. Bakhtin and Voloshinov note that the use of certain words at certain times necessarily means that at the same time we are repressing or ignoring the use of others; they see this as conscious selection. It is in these dialogic moments that we can reshape the existing doxa (in the Husserlian sense) and change our way of relating to each other and to our surroundings.

In practice, one way doxa is recognized is when confrontation with alternative taken-for-granteds makes it clear that either continuing in

traditional ways or changing is subject to choice by knowledgeable agents. A number of authors have shown that culture contact situations in the Americas provided precisely the kind of confrontations between different forms of doxa that can lead to more conscious orthodoxy and heterodoxy (e.g. Loren 2001; Silliman 2001).

Doxa manifests itself as practical knowledge carried out at a level below discourse (hence non-reflexive, but not unconscious). Giddens (1979:xxiv) uses the term structuration to refer to the active constitution of structure by differentially knowledgeable agents:

> What agents know about what they do, and why they do it, their knowledgeability as agents is largely carried in practical consciousness… Practical consciousness consists of all the things which actors know tacitly about how to 'go on' in the contexts of social life without being able to give them direct discursive expression.

Conduct becomes reflexive when it becomes discursive, and this usually only happens when people question behavior that flouts convention or departs from the habitual norms of social reproduction.

Early contact between European and Native American populations created situations that highlighted some of the doxa of each group. The reiteration or transformation of these different forms of doxa as orthodoxy and heterodoxy can be traced through careful reading "reading against the grain" of the extant documentary record of these encounters. In Honduras specifically, what are conventionally described as a linear sequence of events can be seen as the creation of three intertwined dialogues between indigenous people living along the north coast and the Spanish people who over the course of three decades repeatedly appeared, engaged in acts of communication, and then departed. Treating the exchanges of actions that unfolded during the early sixteenth century as a series of dialogues between Spanish and indigenous actors, we can explore what was doxic for each group, and how each action and its dialogic response, at times orthodox, and at times heterodox, contributed to the creation of a world whose material traces archaeologists have only begun to document, and historians have yet to even attempt systematically to understand: indigenous life in early sixteenth century northern Honduras.

Trujillo, the First Dialogue

In 1502 Columbus initiated the first dialogue between Spanish and indigenous Honduran actors when he intercepted a canoe off the coast of Honduras and brought its people ashore at the site of present-day Trujillo (Chamberlain 1953: 9). Multiple European descriptions of these events exist (Edwards 1978). All of them are, to one extent or another, colored by inferences about the indigenous people and their roles and motivations that assume knowledge the Spanish participants were unlikely to have had.

Accounts from passengers aboard Columbus's ships describe the canoe and its occupants as traders, conforming to European assumptions about the motivations that would have led to voyage with a cargo like that witnessed. This does not mean these interpretations should be accepted uncritically. In a discussion of chronicles of contact in the southeast United States, Patricia Galloway (1992) proposed that first contact narratives need to be read carefully, to identify what the European participants could have known, and what assumptions they were likely bringing to the event from other similar situations.

Taking the approach advocated by Galloway, we can examine what statements of observations tell us, independent of the interpretations the Spanish witnesses made of them. The canoe reportedly contained metal ore, tools to produce metal ornaments, cacao, and other items that the Spanish interpreted as trade goods. In the Central American context, these are all wealth items. While traders could have carried such a cargo, these could also have been goods accompanying any wealthy traveler. The accounts of this event note that the occupants could only understand the language of the mainland people near Trujillo. This is inconsistent with the idea that this was a canoe voyaging to Yucatan on a trading mission, since ability to speak either a lingua franca (like Nahuatl) or multiple languages (as discussed in the preceding chapter) was normal for long distance traders in the region.

The reported presence of people of different ages and sexes forming families more closely conforms to what we might expect from an inter-elite visit, with the "trading goods" corresponding with the kinds of wealth known to have formed the basis of inter-elite exchange. Even the metal working implements and ores are consistent with the control of metallurgy as a prestige craft by indigenous leaders (Helms 1979). To call the occupants of this Honduran canoe "traders" naturalizes Spanish understandings of roles and relations. We are left wondering what the indigenous people in the canoe made of the Spanish galleon and crew, what accounts they left with their families and neighbors.

When Columbus set foot on mainland Honduras near Trujillo, he gave gifts to the native people living nearby, likely including the residents of the late prehispanic site today known as Rio Claro (Healy 1978), and had a priest say mass. Spanish colonists repeatedly describe taking actions to allow church services, because this was part of their doxa for claiming new lands for the Spanish Crown. While Columbus took some of the people from the canoe with him as he sailed east, he released them nearby when they could no longer communicate with the native groups he encountered along the coast.

The dialogue around Trujillo continued in early 1525 when about 40 Spaniards came from Triunfo de la Cruz, on the coast to the west, to found the Spanish town of Trujillo (Chamberlain 1953: 14-15). Later that year, Pedro Moreno, from the Audiencia of Santo Domingo, landed military forces that went inland and took slaves from the native peoples encountered, members of the Chapagua and Papayeca polities. The Trujillo colonists continued this practice of forcefully taking native people for labor after Moreno departed.

From the Spanish perspective, the local indigenous population had become subject to their authority with the establishment of Trujillo. We can assume that the peoples of Chapagua and Papayeca had a different view of things. Far from seeing themselves as colonized by an entirely new kind of government, they would have interpreted Spanish actions in terms understandable to them. They were familiar with established practices of more centralized polities to the west, which raided other towns for slaves as part of a political economy that Wonderley (1985) described as based on raiding and trading. Thus, we can suspect that with the actions of Moreno and others after him, the impression of the Spanish was shifted from one of incidental visitors (Columbus) who gave gifts as did other peaceful visitors from distant lands, to that of offensive forces, but within an established doxa of inter-group hostility.

Hernan Cortés arrived at Trujillo, whose Spanish colonists owed their loyalty to him, in mid 1525, and caused a church to be built, using native labor to clear the lot and build the structure. In this he echoed one of the colonizing actions of Columbus. Cortes tells us that he reached out to the Papayeca and Chapagua caciques as he had elsewhere, sending Nahua speaking auxiliaries from Mexico to talk to them, and offering gifts. This also repeated actions taken by Columbus, who used the people he seized from the canoe he encountered as translators, and also presented local leaders with gifts. The two indigenous polities sent people and gifts of their

own to Cortés. Cortes in turn gave these representatives more gifts and sent them back to their respective towns.

The giving of gifts, likely accompanied by words explaining they were now subjects of the Spanish Crown, was another action through which Spanish colonists claimed to have "pacified and conquered" indigenous peoples. Yet gift-giving was also part of the repertoire of indigenous social practices, through which peers established peaceful relations (Helms 1993). We might consequently reconsider whether gift giving by the Chapagua and Papayeca was intended to acknowledge Cortes, as overlord, or as equal.

Shortly thereafter, two secondary leaders of Chapagua and Papayeca brought Cortés another round of gifts of food and asked why he came. Cortes (1989:418-419) reports that he replied "to found there towns of Christians to instruct them in the mode of life they were to follow for the preservation of their persons and their property as well as for the salvation of their souls". For Cortes, this speech would have concretized the incorporation of these people in the Spanish realm. Again, he gave these Papayeca and Chapagua representatives gifts and asked them to send food and labor to Trujillo, which they did.

Cortés reported that native leaders from far inland came to Trujillo to submit. Others offered what he described as resistance. When Cortés attempted to leave Honduras late in 1525, the native people refused further to provide food and labor for the Spanish who were remaining in Trujillo. The inhabitants of both Papayeca and Chapagua fled into the mountains. Cortés, whose departure was delayed by a storm, says he was able to convince some of the Papayeca to return to their village and continue to help the Spanish, but he failed with the Chapagua, against whom he then led a military campaign, enslaving many.

To understand this sequence of exchanges from an indigenous perspective we need to consider what might have been doxic for the Chapagua and Papayeca people involved. There was a long history of contact and exchange of goods between native peoples both within Honduras, and between the north coast of Honduras and various Maya polities in Belize and Yucatan. Sixteenth century historic sources identify the principal goods coming from Honduras to Yucatan as copper, feathers, and cacao (Henderson 1977). Sixteenth-century sources clearly indicate that the Maya of Belize and Yucatan were making trips to the Ulúa valley, meeting with people there, and bringing goods back home (Landa 1973; Roys 1957; Scholes and Roys 1948). Thus, when the Spanish arrived on the north coast of Honduras, they encountered a people already accustomed to visits from outsiders. Native peoples of Honduras understood gift giving

between elites as a peer-to-peer activity, not one of domination and submission.

The canoe Columbus appropriated in 1502 carried both men and women, probably members of an elite household, and was stocked with copper, cacao, and other goods. The types of goods enumerated in Spanish sources are the kinds of things attested to in the historic and archaeological record as goods that were part of inter-elite exchange (Blanton 2001; Edwards 1978; Feinman 2001; Henderson 1977). This encounter would have fit with the indigenous doxa of elite households exchanging goods during visits and then leaving. As an expression of Spanish doxa, this encounter was portrayed as a peaceful claiming of Honduras by Columbus for the Spanish Crown. The actions reported for both sides fit the expected behaviors of both the Spanish and the native people around Trujillo, but the different parties would have had very different understandings of what had taken place.

The taking of slaves on Moreno's visit must have changed the way that subsequent Spanish arrivals were understood, but again, there were indigenous practices that framed those understandings: raids for slaves by neighboring peoples. What this additional experience did was define more than one kind of expectation for Spanish visitors. Cortés had to reach out to the local indigenous groups, and give them gifts before they would meet with him. Even then, it was the secondary elite of a subsidiary town, not the rulers of Papayeca and Chapagua, who met with him and exchanged gifts with him.

When Cortés began to leave (without taking all the Spanish in residence with him), the indigenous people in the area ceased to provide food and labor for Trujillo. The Spanish perceived this as a revolt, in conformity with their doxic, unquestioned understanding of events. Retreats into the mountains to escape visitors who turned out to be intent on raiding are repeatedly reported in Honduras as a response to Spanish colonial campaigns. It may have already been part of the doxic repertoire of indigenous people in the area, newly seen as appropriate for the Spanish visitors, now understood to be intent on more aggressive, hostile social relations. Needless to say, nothing in this series of verbal and pragmatic exchanges indicates that the indigenous population either understood the claim of sovereignty being made, or accepted it.

Naco, the Second Dialogue

Exchanges between Spanish and indigenous residents living together in the valley of Naco form a more complex dialogue. Cristobal de Olid, the captain sent south by Cortes following reports by the Mexica of a wealthy country who then claimed Honduras for himself, moved a portion of his forces from a short-term settlement on the north coast, Triunfo de la Cruz, to Naco in mid-1524 (Chamberlain 1953). By all accounts, the people of Naco were welcoming to the Spanish forces. We must assume they were acting on their own doxa, not (as the Spanish interpreted things) simply accepting Spanish rule.

Naco was a cosmopolitan place connected to a network of trading towns that extended west to the edge of the Mexica empire (Wonderley 1981, 1985, 1986b). Archaeological evidence of pottery typical of Naco recovered at the Rio Claro site (Healy 1978) suggests Naco also had links east to the Papayeca and Chapagua peoples around Trujillo, who may have been the source of Olid's specific knowledge of Naco's wealth, but equally could have shared their experiences of Spanish visitors with their inland allies.

Olid made Naco the locale for a series of conflicts with other Spanish troops. He captured and imprisoned two other Spanish leaders there. These captives ultimately executed Olid and took control of his forces at Naco. Factional infighting would not have been unfamiliar to the inhabitants of Naco, who hosted competing elites from Yucatan as trade partners (Henderson 1977; Wonderley 1981, 1985, 1986b). Shortly thereafter, in 1525, Cortés moved the surviving Spaniards from Naco back to the coast, to a newly founded city, La Natividad (Cortes 1990; Diaz 1980).

The people of Naco and surrounding towns appear to have ignored the opportunity presented by the factional conflict, an opportunity that they might have taken to evict the Spanish if they had thought of themselves as either under attack by raiders (as the Papayeca and Chapagua apparently did) or as being "conquered and pacified" (as these early Spanish actors claimed they had been). In reality the early Spanish presence in these valleys lasted only a matter of months, and then the Spanish left. From the perspective of local doxa, these were temporary visits by foreigners in a cosmopolitan town used to such visits, not a permanent change in local autonomy.

In 1533 Andrés de Cereceda and a large number of colonists relocated from Trujillo to the Naco valley. These Spanish had heard of gold in the Naco valley, perhaps from the Papayeca and Chapagua who traded with Naco. Evidence for prehispanic metal working in the Naco area includes the

recovery from a cave located along the edge of the Naco valley of a cache of over 100 copper bells, along with unworked copper (Blackiston 1910). Copper objects compositionally identifiable as from Honduran sources have been identified at Chichen Itza and Mayapan in the Yucatan peninsula (Lothrop 1952; Paris 2008). The copper that Columbus found in the trading canoe he intercepted could have come from near Naco. From the Spanish perspective, however, gold deposits would have been more highly valued, a doxic attitude that differed from the materially evident Honduran emphasis on copper working.

Cereceda reported that the town of Naco was depopulated, compared to the populations Bernal Diaz (1980) described during the Cortés campaign. Cereceda described the indigenous population that remained fleeing into the hills, which is not how they had reacted to earlier Spanish visits. The surviving population of Naco responded to Cereceda and his large force more like the Papayeca and Chapagua had to the colony established at Trujillo. Native people who remained in place near some of the towns in the Naco area, or returned later, were forced into labor for the Spanish population, an experience similar to that seen around Trujillo as well.

In a particularly clear example of different doxic regimes at work, Cereceda's colonists put horses out to pasture near Buena Esperanza, west of Naco. The local people slaughtered and ate the horses, leading Cereceda to complain about them not understanding that horses were not edible (1536 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 6). As Tim Pauketat (2001:8) states, "practices are quite literally the embodiment of people's habitus or dispositions" and "dispositions that guide practice have doxic referents (e.g., unconscious, common sense forms of knowledge)". For the people of Naco, hunting large land animals was engrained practice, as it was for the Spanish colonizers. What differed as a result of their pragmatic experience being in historically separated traditions were the unquestioned assumptions about which land animals were appropriate to hunt and eat.

While we hear only Cereceda's side of this exchange, we can imagine that the people of the Naco valley also found their taken-for-granted assumption, that all land animals were undomesticated and available to hunt and eat, rising to the level of conscious thought. By hunting the introduced horse, they effectively recommitted to an orthodox understanding, refusing to shift to a new model incorporating a category of inedible large mammals, which would have been heterodoxy for them but conforming to Spanish orthodoxy.

The Spanish presence in the Naco, Sula, and Quimistan valleys disrupted social networks tied to those places. Responses by the indigenous

people varied, and eventually included some that seem consistent with an acceptance of the establishment of a Spanish hierarchy of control in a region centered on Naco, if not a full commitment to the position of colonized vassals. In 1535 a group of native leaders from Yamala, a town south of the Naco valley (Figure 2), came to ask Cereceda to intervene against another Spaniard, Cristobál de la Cueva, who had invaded and occupied their town (1535 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 4).

Archaeological investigations of the town of Yamala failed to produce any examples of the fancy Nolasco bichrome pottery that would have indicated it was a peer of Naco (Urban 1993; Weeks 1997; Weeks and Black 1991; Weeks, Black and Speaker 1987). The people of Yamala treated Cereceda and his forces occupying Naco as if they were regional leaders, expected to defend dependent towns. Cereceda's actual failure to control de la Cueva, who unleashed dogs and "man-eating Indians" on the local indigenous population, would have undermined the expectations the local indigenous population would have had for someone who claimed the position of leadership that he asserted was his. While the Spanish continued to have difficulty understanding indigenous actions, indigenous people had, by 1533, a clear concept of what to expect from Spanish incursions, and a repertoire of actions to take to cope with them.

Third Dialogue: Rereading Çocamba's Documentary Record

Sixteenth century documents repeatedly describe the actions of an indigenous actor based in the lower Ulúa valley whose name was most commonly transcribed as Çoçumba, but is likely best rendered as Çocamba. He is described in the Spanish documents in various acts of "resistance" to colonization. Descriptions like these imply that Çocamba understood himself to be reacting to an inevitable colonization. Viewing the documents without this assumption, we can discuss how Çocamba exercised agency under the disruptive conditions that followed early Spanish arrival in northern Honduras.

The primary textual data for understanding Çocamba comes from a series of letters to the Spanish crown from individuals within the colony of Honduras. The earliest letter I use is from Hernan Cortes. The main source of letters is Andres de Cereceda, especially his letters from 1530 to 1536 while he was serving as governor. In addition, I draw on some letters from Diego Garcia de Celis, who in 1533 and 1534 was treasurer of the colony. All of these letters were motivated by the interest of their authors to justify actions that were in some cases questionable, by portraying Honduran

colonization as being unusually difficult. Each writer makes claims about the intentions and actions of indigenous actors that are interpretations based on Spanish assumptions. The challenge, again, is to read the sources for traces of native agency, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy.

Taking such an approach to exchanges in the northern Ulúa valley profoundly changes how we can understand the events reported by the Spanish. The first documented Spanish contact with indigenous residents of the territory of Çocamba was with Cortes, though there may have been prior contact with Gil Gonzalez Davila's people, and certainly must have been with Cristobal d'Olid and Francisco de las Casas's people who travelled through this region on their way between Naco and Triunfo de la Cruz and Trujillo (Figure 1). The first contact with the forces of Cortes, near Choloma (Figure 2), was reportedly peaceful and involved exchange of gifts. Cortes understood this to mean the indigenous inhabitants were conquered, and thus founded a settlement at La Natividad on the coast. Çocamba, acting on his doxic understandings, took the establishment of La Natividad to be a hostile act, and destroyed the settlement. The use of military tactics from virtually the beginning to actively oppose Spanish settlement sets this dialogue apart from either the exchanges centered on Trujillo or those witnessed in the Naco valley, the regions east and west of the lower Ulúa valley.

In 1533, Cereceda dispatched a group from Trujillo to the Naco valley. Turning inland at Puerto Caballos, the group marched past the indigenous towns of Choloma and Tepeapa. Along the way, the Spanish attacked a fortified site near Choloma that they said was subject to Çocamba, and briefly occupied it. There they executed two individuals they identified as subordinate caciques of Çocamba, mutilated their bodies, and sent the corpses to him.

In talking about Çocamba the Spanish use the term "cacique", adopted from Caribbean societies to mean political ruler. We don't know what title or role the native people gave to individuals in Honduras identified by the Spanish as caciques. The status is not singular. Many places, including the unnamed town in the northwest valley that Cereceda's forces attacked in 1533 were reported to have two individuals called caciques.

The Spanish single out Çocamba as the most important cacique in the Ulúa valley. For example, Cereceda writes about "the fort of Cacumba, principal lord" (la [albarrada] de Cacumba pncapl señor) (1536 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 6). For the Spanish Çocamba was singularly important because he directed the military campaign against them. This cannot be taken as proof that he actually was the leader of the entire region, nor does it explain what form leadership took in this area. As Galloway

(1992) notes, the attribution of leadership to indigenous people at the time of initial contact must reflect more the assumptions of the chroniclers than any knowledge that they could have had. Çocamba's role could have been analogous to the Yucatec Maya "Nakom" or war chief, one authority in a system of shared or decentralized political organization (Roys 1957). Here we may see the imposition of the Spanish orthodox assumption of a single ruler on a native orthodoxy of shared, in at least some cases dual, leadership.

Spanish sources identify several towns as being subject to Çocamba. Çocamba's principal town was identified by the paired names of Quitola and Quitamay in the 1536 Repartimiento of San Pedro (AGI Patronato 20 N.4, R.6). The former name never appears again. Quitamay has been identified as a unique and never repeated erroneous spelling of the name Ticamaya (Sheptak 1983). A known archaeological site investigated archaeologically (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006) has been identified as historic Ticamaya, based on its location at the point where an abandoned course of the Rio Choloma (called the rio Balahama in the sixteenth century) met what at the time was the course of the Rio Ulúa. This location matches characteristics of the place described as the principal fortified town of Çocamba: on the bank of the Ulúa River, and also two leagues from the fortified place up river on the rio Balahama where the forces of Cereceda killed two people identified as caciques who were subordinates of Çocamba.

A number of towns, Toloa, Yux (or Yuca), Estupil, Pepel, and Tonaltepeque, were identified as "sujeto" (subject) to Çocamba. Pedro Alvarado's Repartimiento of San Pedro describes very few towns as having other towns as subjects. The document is not clear about what that means or how Pedro Alvarado or others would have known that one town was subject to another. The document adds that these towns had fifteen, eight, or as few as six houses, reinforcing a collective description as "small towns":

> he singled out for himself, the Sr. Adelantado [Pedro Alvarado] / the town of Quitola and Quitamay, of which is lord Çocamba that is on the Rio de Ulúa that by visitation has been found to have as many as 80 men / and with them some small towns to them subject of 15 or 8 or 6 houses each one that are called Toloa, Yux (Yuca?), Estupil, Pepel, Tonaltepeque, that are toward the area of the hills of the Rio de Ulúa.
>
> [señalo para si el dicho señor adelantado / el pueblo de quitola e quitamay de ques señor Cocumba que es [por?] rio de Olua que segun por visitacion se hallado tiene hasta ochenta hombres/ y con ellos unos pueblos pequeños a ellos sujet[os] de quinze o ocho o a seys

casas cada uno que llaman / Toloa/ yuca(?)/ estupil/ pepel / tonaltepeque /que son hazia la parte de las sierras del rio de Olua.] (1536 AGI Patronato 20 N. 4 R. 6)

Ticamaya itself is described as having "eighty men", suggesting an overall concern about the size of the fighting force for battles led by Ticamaya behind the unusual practice of enumerating the size of these towns.

Only one of the subordinate towns named can be located approximately: Toloa, in the northeast Ulúa valley. Because they are collectively described as in the same location, we assume the other small towns were in the same area. To these towns named as subject to Çocamba's principal town of Ticamaya we can add the unnamed fortified place on the western valley edge near Choloma, where the Spanish defeated and executed two men described as caciques subordinate to Çocamba.

All of these towns cluster in the north part of the Ulúa valley. At least some of these subject towns are also described as having their own caciques. The Spanish accounts imply a multi-level centralized hierarchy bound by tribute and military service; precisely the kind of system they were trying to impose on the colony. What we do not know, from this description, is what the indigenous view of this same group of settlements and people might have been.

Çocamba's principal town of Quitola/Quitamay was described as being a palisaded fort with features not unlike a Spanish castle. The palisade is described by Diego Garcia de Celis (1534 AGI Guatemala 49 N. 9) as being made of rustic timber, with promenades for guards (andañas), and guard towers (cubitos), with a moat surrounding it and a single entrance facing the river:

> the governor was informed that this Çoçumba was very fortified by strong palisades of thick wood and that there were made a great quantity of holes covered by their lids.
> [se ynformo el governador que este çoçumba estava muy fortalecado de recias albarradas de gruesa madera y que estaban echos mucho cantidad de oyo en cubiertos por los casquitos dellos]

In another letter (1535 AGI Guatemala 49 N. 11) Garcia de Celis adds more detail about the kinds of fortification there: "Su albarrada fortalecida de much andanas y cubos en su albarrada que tanbien es muy poblado" [His palisade fortified by many guardwalks and guardtowers in his palisade that is also very populated].

Cereceda (1535 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 4) claimed that palisaded towns were common in the Ulúa Valley region:

> on the Rio Balahama [Choloma] where our road was we found a palisade of the kind that I wrote about to your majesty that the indians of that region and of the Rio Ulúa make for their fortress. [en el rio de balahama / por donde hera nro. camyno hallamos una albarrada de las que escrevi a vra. mg+. que hazra los yndios de aquella comarca y del rio de Ulúa / para su fortaleza]

The Spanish did not describe native towns elsewhere in Honduras, such as around Naco or Trujillo, as being palisaded, nor does the archaeological evidence from Naco or other documented fifteenth or early sixteenth century archaeological sites with surface architecture include any indication of such features (Healy 1978; Henderson 1977; Neff, Urban, and Schortman 1990; Wonderley 1981, 1984a, 1984b, 1985, 1986a, 1986b). In the eyes of Spanish observers, it was a strategic practice distinctive of Ulúa River society, that contrasted with their neighbors, not part of taken-for-granted practices that might have made up doxa throughout Honduras.

Naco and the Papayeca and Chapagua towns apparently formed part of a network extending to the Mexica empire, based on their being pictured on a map showing the overland route to Honduras provided to Cortes at the trading enclave of Acalan (Scholes and Roys 1948). The Ulúa towns were partners on a different network, one extending by water up the east coast of Yucatan. The Spanish did report palisaded and walled towns in Yucatan. This raises the possibility that the palisaded towns in the Ulúa Valley may have been products of a practice adapted from a local network of allies, perhaps even in the early period of Spanish contact. Fortified towns in Yucatan protected the residences of the wealthy nobility (Cortes Rincon 2007:179-180). Tulum is perhaps the most well known late prehispanic example, located on the eastern coast of Yucatan (Lothrop 1924; Miller 1982).

Archaeological investigations at the archaeological site identified as historical Ticamaya provide an opportunity to assess what life was like for the people of the lower Ulúa valley during this period of active military campaigns against Spanish invasion (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006; Sheptak, Blaisdell-Sloan and Joyce 2011). Blaisdell-Sloan (2006) carried out systematic augur testing that confirmed that buried site components extended continuously across a well-defined area of 140 by 215 meters. Artifact densities were highest near the riverbanks, suggesting a concentration of settlement in this area, consistent with Spanish descriptions

of the riverbank settlement. Unfortunately, a planned investigation using a cesium magnetometer, which might have produced evidence of any palisade, was truncated when the instrument stopped functioning. Nonetheless, the small size (just over 2 hectares) and compact nature of the settlement are consistent with an enclosed site.

If the report of 80 "men" at Ticamaya can be taken as meaning there were approximately 80 households there, then the settlement would have been crowded, with 26 households per hectare, consistent with Ticamaya being a bounded settlement as described in Spanish texts. Clusters of artifacts and other cultural material identified at Ticamaya covered areas of 10 to 20 meters in diameter. This is within the range documented for groups of buildings and associated exterior spaces that were the normal residential architecture in prehispanic sites in the Ulúa valley, where house compounds averaged 12-15 meters in width (Sheptak, Blaisdell-Sloan and Joyce 2011). The mapped area of Ticamaya would have accommodated approximately 75 residential compounds represented by clusters of artifacts at the large end of the size range (20 meters across) documented there, consistent with Spanish reports of 80 "men" at Ticamaya.

Blaisdell-Sloan (2006) excavated features dating to the sixteenth century in three areas of the site, including part of two different buildings, an oven, and traces of use of exterior space. These features provide a window into indigenous experience that contrasts with but can be related to the Spanish texts already discussed (Sheptak, Blaisdell-Sloan, and Joyce 2011).

Structure 3A

One sixteenth century house was partially excavated in Operations 3A, 3B, and 3D (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006:134-136, 249, 254-255). A single posthole and hearth were completely excavated. Inside the hearth were the remains of a single broken ceramic vessel. A burned clay wasp's nest was probably attached to the building here when it was burned. Within a short distance outside the house, large pieces of utilitarian pottery were recovered on the same level as the hearth and posthole. The hearth, the broken pot in it, and the range of artifacts found securely indicate that this was a residential area.

Artifacts included obsidian blade fragments, six projectile points unifacially chipped on blades, broken pieces of pottery, fragments of deer antler, and a small piece of sheet copper. All the obsidian came from a distant source, Ixtepeque, in southeast Guatemala. Deer antler was widely used in prehispanic Honduras for tools including awls and punches, and for tools like those used today in removing corn kernels from the cob. The

pottery included utilitarian unslipped and red slipped bowls and jars used for food preparation and serving, as well as red painted on white slip Nolasco Bichrome, interpreted as imported from the indigenous town of Naco to the west where it was preferentially used in wealthy, high status households, primarily occurring in the form of dishes used in food serving (Urban 1993; Wonderley 1981, 1986). In light of the reported presence of copper on the canoe intercepted by Columbus, the presence of lost or discarded copper at Ticamaya is a significant indication of participation by the residents in exchange for and use of metal objects.

Animal bone from turtles, rodents, and white-tailed deer, and crustaceans and riverine snail shells, attest to hunting and fishing for food, with a strong emphasis on animals available due to the riverine location of the settlement. Fragments of tubers, probably manioc, and *Helianthus* (sunflower) and *Artemisia* seeds (a medicinal plant) were recovered from inside the structure itself, near the hearth (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006:254-255).

Overlying sediments were mixed with large amounts of carbon, as if the building had been burned, an event also suggested by the finding of a burned wasp's nest probably originally attached to the house. Blaisdell-Sloan (2006:152) obtained a radiocarbon date from this building that when calibrated fell either between AD 1480-1520 or 1560-1630. The presence of the painted pottery typical of Naco, which ceased to be made once the region was colonized, indicates that this burning most likely happened in the first half of the sixteenth century. It is not unreasonable to suggest that this may have been a building impacted by the attack on Çocamba's palisaded fortress made by Pedro Alvarado in 1536.

Structure 1A

Remains of a second sixteenth-century structure, which differed from Structure 3A in significant ways and may not have been purely residential in nature, were outlined in Operation 1A and 1D (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006:122-124, 228, 248). Two large (30 cm. diameter) post holes were identified, lined with plaster, located 4 meters apart on an east-west line. Artifacts were rare, but included red and unslipped bowls and jars and some obsidian blades. Animal bone recovered likely came from deer but could have been from sheep or goat, as the preservation did not allow discrimination between these three related species.

Structure 1A was the most recent of a series of buildings in the same location. Structure 1B, the version immediately preceding Structure 1A, had been used by residents still engaged in ritual practices that were discouraged by the colonial authorities (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006:125). In each of the corners

of this building there were buried deposits, containing a total of five ceramic incense burning vessels, tobacco seeds (a plant used for ritual), and ocelot and coyote teeth (animals whose skulls, teeth, and skins were worn as costume). It is possible that the sixteenth-century structure with large plastered posts (an innovation) that replaced this sacralized building may also have been used for ritual. One possibility is that this became the location of the colonial church.

The oven

The remains of a sixteenth century pit oven or ceramic kiln one meter in diameter pit, 50 cm. deep, lined with burned clay, was excavated in Operation 2C and 2D (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006:131-132, 152, 169, 228-229, 249, 254). After it stopped being used, the oven was filled with garbage including obsidian projectile points, turtle, peccary, white-tailed deer, and other animal bone fragments, and riverine snail and bivalve shells. Carbonized maize seeds and tuber fragments were also found. Ceramics included red, incised, and burnished wares, all domestic ceramics for food preparation and serving. Blaisdell-Sloan (2006: 152, 309) obtained a radiocarbon date from the fill in this oven that calibrated as either between AD 1440-1520, or between 1590-1620. The artifacts present, especially the projectile points, suggest that the earlier dates are more likely, and that use of this oven may have been abandoned as a consequence of changes following the early sixteenth century campaign against Ticamaya.

Other exterior space

In Operation 2A and 2B two successive surfaces were defined that could be assigned to the sixteenth century. Both were marked by small pits, with dispersed bits of burned daub from local wattle-and-daub buildings (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006:130, 254). Plant remains including food plants, coyol palm seeds and lumps of tubers such as manioc or sweet potato complemented these indications of ephemeral structures. *Carex* and *Paspalum,* plants used for bedding or matting, were also found here.

Discussion

The excavations at Ticamaya provide a glimpse of life at about the time that its residents, guided by Çocamba, were fighting Spanish attempts to gain control of the Ulúa valley. Two radiocarbon samples from burned Structure 3A and an abandoned oven have likely dates of AD 1480-1520 and 1440-1520, consistent with wood from around the time of these events.

Support for the idea that these areas were sites of engagement during

this period comes from the inventory of artifacts. Obsidian dart or arrow points like those recovered at Ticamaya are understood as made for used in battle, originally based on artistic depictions, and reinforced by edge-wear analysis and their recovery from deposits at Aguateca, Guatemala associated with intensive warfare (Aoyama 2005:204; Pendergast, Jones, and Graham 1993:67). Of the 34 points recovered at Ticamaya, 21 (61%) were from early sixteenth century contexts that also showed evidence of burning of household features (Blaisdell-Sloan 2006:134, 154, 236, 238). This included the area around the early sixteenth century oven, where a group of six obsidian projectile points were recovered.

While Spanish documents are almost silent about life in indigenous settlements, these archaeological data demonstrate that for the people who lived at Ticamaya, the struggle of more than a decade against Spanish colonization had profound effects on everyday life. The closeness of houses within palisaded towns would have created constant awareness of others. Threats of attack intruded on everyday life, as the evidence of burned houses and the deposit of stone points in domestic settings illustrates. Women, the very young, and the very old would have experienced the constraints on mobility more, creating conditions for adult males to form a distinct camaraderie based on their participation in raids outside the town (Sheptak, Blaisdell-Sloan, and Joyce 2011). In this context of gender segregation, militarization, and sustained hostility at least two people of Spanish origin engaged with the town and people of Çocamba between 1526 and 1536.

Men and Women, Captives and "Cousins"

Çocamba was in the position to have knowledge of Spanish doxa from networks reaching along the coast even before Spanish entry into Honduras. Through these networks, he was connected to one of the earliest culture contact situations in the region, in which the Spanish doxa of a shipwrecked sailor gave way to a heterodoxy that aligned him with the interests of indigenous military leaders strategizing against Spanish invasion.

In one of his letters to the Spanish monarch, Andres de Cereceda described assistance sent to help Çocamba fight the Spanish (1536 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 6). They were led by a Spaniard, Gonzalo Aroca, identifiable as the same person as the Gonzalo Guerrero who refused Cortes's offer to rejoin the Spanish in 1519 in eastern Yucatan (Diaz 1980). According to Bernal Diaz, Guerrero had been taken prisoner by the Maya of Yucatan at the same time as Jerónimo de Aguilar in 1511. Guerrero married

a daughter of the lord of Chetumal and was reported to be a war leader for him.

Cereceda wrote that around December 1535, 50 canoes of warriors arrived in Çocamba's town with Gonzalo Aroca, who he described as

> a Spanish Christian… he who went among the Indians of the province of Yucatan for twenty years… they say that he destroyed the Adelantado Montejo.
> [un cristiano español....el que andaba entre los indios en la provincia de Yucatan veinte años... dizen que destruyo al adelantado montejo] (1536 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 6)

In an earlier letter, Cereceda said that he had heard that Çocamba had taken a Christian woman as his "mujer" (1535 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 4):

> I had and have the desire to discover if this is so, to find out my possibility of removing from the power of that Cacique Çoçumba a Christian Spanish woman who, by clues and investigation I have discovered is from Seville, of those that were killed at Puerto de Caballos ten years ago, that was married to one of the dead, and from information of the Indians I have learned that that Cacique Çoçumba has her as his woman.
> [yo tenia y tengo deseo de hallarme a esto asy por has allo my posybilidad / como por sacar de poder de aquel Cacique Cacamba / una muger Xpriana espanola que por señas y pesquisa he sabido ques de sevilla / de los q. mataron a puerto de Cavallos diez años ha que hera casada con uno de los muertos y por ynfir[on] de yndios he sabido quel Cacique Cacamba la tiene por muger.]

The "captive woman" is a familiar image from histories of the Spanish colonies where conflicts with indigenous people continued for multiple generations. James Brooks (2002) argues that such exchanges of captured women and men were processes of colonization that engaged ideas of kinship, shame, and honor. He suggests that "the capture of 'enemy' women and children was...one extreme expression along a continuum of exchange...they could serve as agents and objects of the full range of exchanges, from the peaceful to the violent" (Brooks 2002:17-18).

In Honduras, the capture of the woman from Sevilla paralleled a history of Spanish men moving into outlying farmsteads in the Naco valley to live with indigenous women there (Sheptak, Blaisdell-Sloan, and Joyce 2011). In each case, sexual liaisons across group boundaries were viewed by the Spanish as violations of their doxic expectations. Çocamba's relationship

with the woman from Sevilla, seen by the Spanish as heterodoxic marriage across racial categories (inappropriate for a conquered native person) was orthodox by indigenous standards, where marriages across political boundaries were part of the repertoire of political relations.

Captured in the attack on La Natividad, this "woman from Sevilla" provided Çocamba a second source of information about Spanish doxa. Cereceda (1535 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 4) wrote that

> she is held as much among the Indians that arrive there in friendship; from whom he [Çocamba] has learned that there are Christians in the territory, saying that he cannot for his strength resist; even though he has killed Christians he could be pardoned.
> [y que le atribuye a mucho con los yndios que venian en amistad desde quel ha sabido q. ay Xprianos en la tierra diziendole q. no se pueda por su fuerza de Resystar q. aunque aya muerto Xprianos sera perdonado]

This is in fact what happened. Cereceda described the final battle between Çocamba and Alvarado as an attack by land and water on one of the palisaded towns on the Ulúa River (1536 AGI Guatemala 39 R. 2 N. 6). In the end, Alvarado prevailed, and Guerrero was found dead on the battlefield. Çocamba surrendered, and he and the other principal lords of his province converted. The Spanish crown acknowledged Cereceda's report in a letter dated June 30 of 1537 (1537 AGI Guatemala 402). In a marginal note, the passage is titled "el gran señor se llamaba soamba, el que se redujo a christiano" [the great lord that they called Soamba, he that was made a Christian]. The Spanish monarch cites Cereceda's report that Alvarado undertook a successful campaign against

> a Great Lord that they say they have in that land that is called Soamba who is the one that has done all the damage to the Christians that have occurred to them in that land, who he [Alvarado] came near and took prisoner with all the principal people of the land and they converted to Christian by their own will and they undertook to continue in peace, which has been the cause that all the rest of this province has given obedience.
> [un Gran Señor que diz que hay en esa tierra que se llama Soamba que es el que a hecho a los christianos todos los daños que les an venido en ella, al qual cerco y lo tomo preso con todos los principales de esa tierra y se tornaron christianos por su voluntad y se concertaron de

seguir de paz, lo qual habia sido causa que todo el resto de esa provincia diese la obediencia]

This is the most compelling evidence that Çocamba had an understanding of Spanish doxa, perhaps from his dialogues with Guerrero or the "woman from Sevilla". By surrendering and converting to Christianity he followed Spanish doxa, and was allowed to live, though not to govern. This tactical appropriation of Spanish doxa was apparently effective in helping Çocamba's kin survive and maintain their status as recognized community leaders. In research on accounting documents, Pastor Gomez (personal communication) identified Çocamba as a family name used around 1548 by the alcalde of a colonial pueblo de indios, Santiago Çocamba, that emerged as one of the persistent indigenous settlements that survived throughout the sixteenth century (Gomez 2002).

While Çocamba stood out for Spanish writers (and thus, for those of us who are dependent on the documents they produced) because of his active military campaigns, these campaigns were only one among a range of tactics he employed. The tactics he employed were also used by other indigenous people who actively created new practices in the early colonial period through their exercise of agency, shaped by new consciousness of what had formerly been unexamined ways of acting.

Tactics and Practical Politics: Beyond "Resistance"

Michel de Certeau's (1984) concept of everyday practices as "tactics" emphasizes the decentered and everyday nature of the ways that people shape their own lives, even when they are not in positions of apparent power. Tactics are how people occupy social situations that they do not entirely control. The "appropriation" of what is offered in colonial situations may be tactical, achieving goals different from those intended by people who seek control (Sheptak, Joyce, and Blaisdell-Sloan 2011). People employ tactics to seize the moment for pragmatic ends, bringing a "repertoire of practices... into a space designed for someone else" (Poster 1992:102). Beyond the military opposition to Spanish invasion carried out by Çocamba, his adoption of the Christian religion and his surrender to Spanish authority also have to be seen as tactical. Indigenous people who lived through the imposition of colonial order, and their descendants who endured, and gained security for more than 250 years in the Spanish partido of San Pedro, the former province of Çocamba, employed a wide range of tactics that involved using the Spanish system for their own ends. These tactics included

successfully petitioning to reduce tribute requirements by asserting population declines had taken place, pursuing claims based on adherence to the introduced Catholic faith, and advancing novel arguments for standing in Spanish courts (Sheptak, Joyce, and Blaisdell-Sloan 2011).

The history of tribute assessment recorded for Despoloncal, an indigenous town located upriver from Çocamba's territory, illustrates how indigenous persistence in producing cacao, important for indigenous practices, was balanced against a population that declined steadily in the first century of colonial exploitation (Sheptak, Joyce, and Blaisdell-Sloan 2011). In 1548 the cacique of Despoloncal, speaking through an interpreter and thus dependent on the translation made by this intermediary, stated that his town had 35 laborers, and could pay tribute in cacao and chickens (1591 AGCA A3.16.1 Legajo 236 Expediente 2421). The actual tribute ordered was much more than offered by the cacique, but the justice also include passages that suggest the people of Despoloncal had a degree of autonomy: "given the said tribute, they will be free to do what they will with their persons", he wrote, warning the Spanish recipient of tribute not to take "any other thing" from the people of the town. In 1571, tribute burdens were reduced. Again in 1583, the colonial government reduced tribute obligations, stating that "the living do not have to pay tribute for the dead, nor those present for those absent, and when some die or absent themselves, the community may ask for justice", that is, a reduction in tribute. Documents like these became the basis for successful legal cases brought by the people of many indigenous towns including Masca, the focus of this study, in the following centuries.

Tribute demands were based on population size, but population size was initially based on statements by community leaders, whose sworn testimony substantiated how many people obligated to pay tribute lived in each town. By the early eighteenth century, indigenous leaders were required to produce church registers of births, marriages, and deaths, to support their testimony (for example, 1722 AGCA A3.16.3 Legajo 514 Expediente 5402). A step taken to try to confirm who lived where, this requirement also demonstrates that it was still indigenous authorities who controlled both the records and the knowledge they supported, and who could employ those sources and that knowledge tactically.

Claims based on religion were particularly important grounds for tactical moves by members of indigenous communities throughout the colonial period (Sheptak, Joyce, and Blaisdell-Sloan 2011). Already in 1583 the "Indians that serve in the church of the town" at Despoloncal were required to pay the same tribute as others, but could use community goods for this purpose (1591 AGCA A3.16.1 Legajo 236 Expediente 2421).

Communal property held as support for religious practices was developed through independent religious confraternities, *cofradias*. In 1742, the priest serving, but not resident in, Despoloncal reported that the origins of its cofradias were not documented, but were knowledge held by the indigenous members themselves (1742 AGCA A1 Legajo 222 Expediente 2479).

In the neighboring town of Petoa, a cura responding to the same request for information asked that an Indian of Christian habits would be appointed, who would maintain the security of the chapels where he claimed the indigenous people were entering and carrying on "their ancient idolatry", likely a reference to devotions to images of saints, central to cofradias. Indigenous people maintained and used the church buildings in their towns throughout the year, even when the official cura was not in residence. Their use of these spaces was clearly seen by this cleric as heterodox, tactical appropriations of the imposed religion (Sheptak, Joyce, and Blaisdell-Sloan 2011).

As the spatial focus of locally controlled, locally meaningful Roman Catholic rituals, town churches became sites of particularly complicated tactical action (Sheptak, Joyce, and Blaisdell-Sloan 2011). In 1778, the indigenous community of Yamala petitioned for relief from taxation, in order to have the resources to complete rebuilding of the church (1778 AGCA A1.11-25 Legajo 42 Expediente 364). Instead, they were told to use income from their cofradia land and cattle to cover the costs. In 1796, they initiated a new request for relief from tribute payments, again to pay for completing the roof of the church (1796 AGCA A1.25 Legajo 123 Expediente 1432). The epitome of a "space designed for someone else", churches were occupied tactically by indigenous communities which used the moral authority of church tactically, to advance claims for relief from economic demands of many kinds.

Thus, some of the most important tactics for indigenous persistence in Honduras employed discourses, institutions, spaces, and objects that have long served as evidence that the imposed Spanish colonial order won out over a quickly lost Honduran indigenous heritage. This is what de Certeau (1984:29-42) described as "making do": the repeated actions of everyday life through which people make their own place in spaces designed for someone else. That their history and identity changed, rather than remaining static, should not make us treat the descendant communities as less authentic (Hanks 1986). Consequently, this study avoids judging the authenticity of the people and town of Masca, whether on the grounds of adherence to use of language, to cultural practices such as foodways, or to racialized lines delimiting acceptable kin relations.

Çocamba, and other native people living in the first decades of the sixteenth century, presumably did not view themselves as being subjects who accepted Spanish authority or rebelled against it. Rather, they would have had their own doxic understandings of practices against which to measure these new experiences. Steve Silliman's notion of practical politics as "the negotiation of the politics of social position and identity in daily practices" is useful as a way to think about situations like this. In a colonial situation daily activities can take on explicit political significance for those carrying them out (Silliman 2001:192). Continuing to do what they had always done may have been as effective a form of resistance for indigenous people in the northern Ulúa valley as were the outright battles recognized as rebellion by the Spanish. It is not just actions that actively ward off incorporation in a colony that are "practical politics", but those through which incorporation in the colony was given a shape that was not entirely in the control of Spanish authorities.

From the inter-elite visit by canoe interrupted by Columbus, to the failures to contract enduring alliances through marriage with the woman of Sevilla on the one hand and the repeated presentation of gifts by the Spanish on the other, the early history of Spanish interaction with indigenous Hondurans was not simply a story of mistranslation and cultural ignorance. It was a process through which each party came to see some of its normal practices as truly choices. As the institution of colonial control began to reshape the landscape in northern Honduras, the choices that indigenous people made were part of what led to the continued persistence of some settlements, while others declined and were abandoned. One place that persisted from the first period of colonization into the nineteenth century, a place originally called Masca and later named Candelaria, provides the case for tracing the unfolding history of indigenous agents remaking their world that will occupy the remainder of this study.