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Cromphout, Alexandra
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Social Differentiation Among the Recuay: An Iconographic Study

Diferenciación social entre los recuay: un estudio iconográfico

Alexandra Cromphout

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

alexandracromphout@hotmail.com

Abstract: From the research presented here, it can be concluded that the Recuay culture (AD 200-700) was a stratified society in which the male warrior retained an essential place. Religious life was dominated by the veneration of the petrified ancestors who, based on the analyses of the stone sculptures, were mostly of the male sex. This consequently puts men at the centre of religious celebrations, a situation which is confirmed by the representations of ceremonies on ceramics. Among these men, however, hierarchical differences could be detected. It appears that different types of warriors existed, each with their specific function. Women, on the other hand, seem to have had lower ceremonial statuses, based on the iconographical evidence. The presence of women in ceremonial scenes – both the larger ones wearing more elaborately decorated clothing and the secondary ones – seems to have amplified the significance of fertility in the religious culture of Recuay life.

Keywords: Recuay; social differentiation; iconography; gender; Andes; Peru; Early Intermediate period.

Resumen: De la investigación aquí presentada, se puede concluir que la cultura recuay (200-700 d. C.) era una sociedad estratificada en la que el guerrero masculino tenía un lugar esencial. La vida religiosa estaba dominada por la veneración de los antepasados petrificados que, de acuerdo con lo que muestran los análisis de las esculturas de piedra, eran en su mayoría de sexo masculino. Esto ponía a los hombres en el centro de las celebraciones religiosas, situación que se ve confirmada por las representaciones de las ceremonias en la cerámica. Entre estos hombres, sin embargo, había diferencias jerárquicas. Todo parece indicar que existían diferentes tipos de guerreros, cada uno con una función específica. Las mujeres, por otra parte, parecen, según la evidencia iconográfica, haber tenido un status ceremonial menor. La presencia de mujeres en escenas ceremoniales –tanto de las de mayor tamaño con ropa más decorada como de las mujeres secundarias– parecen haber amplificado la importancia de la fertilidad en la cultura religiosa de la vida recuay.

Palabras Clave: Recuay; diferenciación social; iconografía; género; Andes; Perú; Desarrollos Regionales.



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Introduction

The archaeological record indicates that the Recuay culture (AD 200-700, North Central Highlands of Peru) was a stratified society. Some people lived in well-built residences with drainages, stone slabs incorporated in the walls and finely crafted masonry. Often located in the centre of the city, these residences contained high status items, such as stone spindle whorls, fancy ceramics and jewelery made of gold, copper, shells or obsidian. Other members lived in dwellings located on the city's outskirts, making them less secure from attacks. These constructions project a more crude quality of workmanship and contained items made of clay and non-precious stones. Examples can be found at the sites of Chinchawas (Lau 2010b: 45-67) and Yayno (Lau 2010d: 333-339).

Such noticeable hierarchical differences existed not only in (daily) life, but also continued on into death for the Recuay. Clear examples of this social stratification have been found at the site of Pashash in the differences between the interment styles of the main burial chamber and the outer one (Grieder 1978: 42-56).

The iconography, as visible on the Recuay ceramics, seems to confirm this situation. Instead of showing mythical beings with canines, as is the case for the better known Chavín culture, Recuay ceramics represent human figures without elements reflecting a divine nature. Based on the similarities between the clothes, the attributes of the ceramic personages, and the archaeological discovery of textiles, *tupu*-pins,¹ pendants of precious stones and shells, and the metal feather-like headdress from Jancu (Amat Olazábal 2003: 108; Wegner 1988), I conclude that the actors in the ceremonial scenes are iconographical representations of real people and not ancestors or divinities, as has been proposed in the past.

Some human personages are associated with attributes and clothing styles containing more qualitative value than others. This does not mean, however, that wearing more elaborately decorated clothes always translates into more important functions or a higher social position. In my study of possible social stratification among the Recuay, I concentrated first on the differences in size among the personages represented on ceramics. Based on the differences in clothing style and attributes between main, solo and secondary personages,² I was able to conclude that there often was a relation between the elaborateness of clothes and the importance of the characters within the ceremonies.

As will be explained further on in this paper, Recuay ceramics depict ceremonial life. Therefore, when considering the status of the personages on these ceramics, I am mainly contemplating their importance in the religious sphere. Some elements, however, seem

1 Mantle pins.

2 As will be explained further on, the ceramic figures are divided according to their appearance on vessel types. Personages on effigy vessels are called solo personages, while on vessels representing ceremonial scenes we can often differentiate between a central larger person – or a main personage – and smaller surrounding figures – or secondary personages.

to point to political – or even propagandist – use of these ceramics by Recuay leaders. These uses include, for example, the glorification of the warrior capacities of certain male personages, the importance of ancestors,³ and funerary rituals (in which men are clearly central). Even if the possibility exists that ceremonial leaders and earthly leaders were completely separate people, as is the case in most present-day western societies, I am of the opinion that among the Recuay both spheres of power were congruent and lacked clearly defined boundaries. I am thus under the impression that the functional and hierarchical differences in ceremonial representations reflect, to some extent, the social differentiation in Recuay society.

Methodology

The first step in this research was to identify male and female personages. Unfortunately, very few personages show genitals by which they can be sexed. Only 16 females and eight males were recognised, based on the presence of breasts, a notch in the pubis or a penis. Combining their attributes with ethnohistorical and anthropological knowledge of men's and women's clothing styles, as well as the evidence found on male stone sculptures, gave enough information to discern some typical attributes and clothing styles of men and women. Based on this information, the sex of the humans without genitals on the other Recuay ceramics was identified.

Only men are associated with headdresses, earspools, tunics and sometimes a loin-cloth. Most men have necklaces. They sometimes have bracelets, and they may have tattooed or painted designs on their faces. They can be associated with a hem,⁴ and they may wear a layered garment.⁵ They can also be associated with coca-bags, musical instruments, cups, a llama, and/or weapons. A few are associated with trophy heads and rectangular plates on their backs.

Women, on the other hand, are the only ones associated with a *manta*⁶ or loose or braided hair. The elevated *manta*⁷ occurs on some occasions and is definitely a female prerogative. They sometimes wear a necklace and are more often associated with bracelets than men. They also may have painted or tattooed designs on their faces. Only women wear a long dress fastened with a belt at the waist and two *tupu*-pins at the shoulders. As was the case for men, women may carry a cup in their hands. Only one woman is associated with a musical instrument: a hand drum.

3 Descent was one of the ways to augment one's social and/or political status.

4 I consider a hem to be the raised border on the bottom part of a shirt. The male personages in my sample of Recuay ceramics are often associated with such a fringe.

5 A layered garment that consists of a cape-like cloth worn over the traditional tunic and ending in a big arc riding over the stomach of the personage.

6 A *manta* is a piece of textile surrounding the heads of women.

7 An elevated *manta* is considered to be a piece of folded cloth, which is taller than the regular *manta*.

Once a sex was attributed to most of the personages, the sample of Recuay ceramics – which consists of a total of 506 vases⁸ – was divided into scene-groups. In this manner, 18 groups were obtained: 1.) one person with a llama; 2.) one person with a cup; 3.) one person with two birds; 4.) one person with two felines; 5.) one person with weapons; 6.) one person with musical instruments; 7.) one person with a child; 8.) one person attacked by an animal; 9.) one person with an animal in his/her hands; 10.) one person with a bag; 11.) one person without attributes; 12.) painted humans; 13.) faces; 14.) spoons; 15.) three-dimensional heads on vases; 16.) copulation scenes; 17.) architectural scenes; and finally 18.) ceremonial scenes.

Table 1 shows how many ceramics each scene-group of my sample contains and which scene-groups may have attributes in common (e.g., there are two vessels showing personages accompanied by two felines, but who are also holding a musical instrument).

After discerning these different scene-groups, the attributes of each human personage were analysed according to the group to which he/she belongs. Lists of attributes and their different motifs were made, and research per attribute-motif was undertaken. Based on this research, some hypotheses were formulated on the ceremonial status of men and women, as well as the different functions both sexes had in Recuay society. These hypotheses are constructed within an archaeological, anthropological and ethno-historical framework.

⁸ These 506 vases consist of: 25 persons with a llama, one person without attributes and a llama (broken off a vase), two persons with an animal in their hands and accompanied by a llama, 30 persons with a cup, one person with a cup and a child, one person with a weapon and a cup, one person with a cup in an architectural setting, 13 persons with two birds, 45 persons with two felines, two persons with two felines and a musical instrument, 24 persons with weapons, three persons with a musical instrument and weapons, ten persons with a musical instrument, one person with a musical instrument and an animal in his/her hands, six persons with a child, nine persons attacked by animals, two persons with an animal in their hands, three persons with a bag, 162 persons without attributes, ten persons without attributes in an architectural setting, 14 painted humans, 24 faces, six spoons, five three-dimensional heads on vases, 15 copulation scenes, four ceremonial and copulation scenes, two ceremonial, architectural and copulation scenes, 14 architectural scenes, 19 ceremonial and architectural scenes, and 53 ceremonial scenes. This brings us to a total of 507 scenes. One vessel, however, depicts on one side a person holding a child and a cup, while the other side shows a person without attributes. Both personages will be described separately, but belong to one and the same vessel. Therefore, it can be concluded that my sample consists of 506 vessels.

	Ceremonial	Architectural	Copulation	3D heads	Spoons	Faces	Painted	Without	1+bag	1+animal	Attacked	1+child	1+music	1+ weapons	1+felines	1+birds	1+cup	1+llama
1+llama								1		2								25
1+cup		1										1		1			30	
1+birds																13		
1+felines													2		45			
1+weapons													3	24			1	
1+music										1			10	3	2			
1+child												6					1	
Attacked											9							
1+animal										2			1					2
1+bag									3									
Without attributes		10						162										1
Painted							14											
Faces						24												
Spoons					6													
3D heads				5														
Copulation	4		15															
Architectural	19	14						10									1	
Ceremonial	53	19	4															
Ceremonial + architectural			2															
Copulation + architectural	2																	
Copulation + ceremonial		2																
Total per scene-group	78	46	21	5	6	24	14	173	3	5	9	7	16	28	47	13	33	28

Table 1. Number of vases per scene-group and cross-referencing of the vessels.

Social stratification among the Recuay

Secondary personages in ceremonial scenes

The discussion of significant social and ceremonial roles inevitably raises the issues of status and how the iconography enhances our understanding of the social stratification in Recuay culture.

As mentioned before, the archaeological record indicates a highly stratified society that continued even after death. From excavations we know that both men and women could be associated with high status items. High status objects associated with men include copper earrings, pendants made from shell or precious stones and a golden diadem in the form of feathers, while copper *tupus* and stone spindle whorls can be considered high status female apparel.

The iconographical representations on ceramics affirm the existence of a stratified society. A first indication is the variation in size of the figures on the vessels. The personages are divided into three groups: solo (people on effigy-vessels), main (central larger figures in ceremonial scenes) and secondary (smaller figures surrounding the main person) characters. The secondary characters generally wear completely different clothes and exhibit completely different attributes – usually with simpler motifs or less elaboration – than the solo or main persons.

As such, the secondary male personages mostly wear simple turbans with sometimes a small crescent on top. They never have elements such as feline heads, human faces, mouths or birds attached to their turbans. Helmets occur only on very specific secondary male personages: those who are positioned on roofs, on stairs, or looking out of windows. These rather peculiar secondary male personages will be discussed later on.

The earplugs worn by secondary personages often lack a design. Contrary to most of the earplug-types, they do not have dots or crosses painted on their interiors.

Face-designs are rather uncommon among secondary female personages. Only 5 % have them. Secondary male personages, however, are associated in 40 % of the cases with tattooed or painted designs on their faces.

Elevated *mantas* are completely absent from secondary female characters. They are clearly associated with individual or main women acting in rather important scenes.

Few secondary female characters are associated with *tupu*-pins (5 %). It seems that *tupus* are the privilege of rather important women.

Necklaces appear more frequently on men than on women. Furthermore, it seems that main and solo personages wear them more often than secondary ones, which seems to indicate that they functioned as identifiers of status.

Bracelets are mostly associated with women. Of the main and solo women, 17 % are known to wear them, while 10 % of the secondary female characters are associated with bracelets. Among the main and solo men, only 6 % wear bracelets, while secondary

male characters are never associated with them. It seems that bracelets are mostly female attributes and that they are associated with either personages holding specific attributes or main characters acting in copulation scenes.

Figurative motifs on clothes, such as felines, birds, snakes, two-headed beings and anthropomorphic frontal faces, occur more frequently on men than on women. They are never associated with secondary personages, either male or female. A reason could have been that the space on the clothes of secondary personages was too small for an artisan to paint the intricate figurative motifs onto them. The fact that they appear more on men than on women is, however, of great importance when investigating hierarchy and/or functional differences between both sexes. More information on this subject is given below.

A similar situation is recognisable among the geometric motifs. They occur more frequently on men than on women, and secondary personages are less often associated with them. A difference is that less space is required for geometric motifs to be painted than for figurative motifs.

Body stripes (painted or tattooed motifs on limbs) are far less common among secondary personages than among the solo or main characters. Only one secondary male figure (one positioned on the outside of a building) and six secondary female personages have them. It seems that body stripes are characteristic of persons of a higher ceremonial status or of personages taking more prominent places in rituals. This seems particularly persuasive when we consider the ease with which these motifs can be painted, even onto small spaces as is the case among secondary personages.

Hems occur rarely on secondary personages. There are only six secondary characters in the whole sample who wear one. Four of these belong to the same vessel (for a picture see Museo Larco 2010), in which they carry a roof and are represented as larger than the other main and secondary personages participating in the ceremonial scene beneath the roof. The other two secondary characters with hems are men positioned on the outer parts of buildings. As mentioned before, the latter are rather peculiar among the secondary personages and often have unusual attributes and clothing styles. It seems that hems only appear on main and solo men and, on rare occasions, among secondary personages with singular functions, such as carrying a roof and on the lookout from buildings.

Belts are found in more or less the same quantity on main and solo women as on secondary female personages. Apparently, belts are the privilege of females without a functional or hierarchical differentiation. The motifs on these belts, however, may differ according to function and/or status. It appears that secondary personages are associated either with belts devoid of a motif or with belts having a rather simple geometric motif such as dots and vertical, horizontal or zigzag lines.

Layered garments are never associated with secondary personages. They mostly occur among the llama-men (Figure 2) and will thus be identified as garments belonging to male personages with a special function and a high religious importance.

Underskirts⁹ are mainly found among llama-men (Figure 2) and, as is the case for layered garments, will be considered as garments belonging to ceremonially important men. There are only seven secondary characters wearing an underskirt, all of whom belong to the same vessel. Four other secondary men have a rectangular plate on their back (Figure 1).

Shields appear mostly in the hands of solo men (Figure 6). Secondary male personages positioned on different parts of buildings are frequently associated with shields as well (Figure 7). Apparently, rather specific men carry shields, of which secondary male personages on the lookout take up an important part.

Clubs occur more frequently than shields among Recuay men. They appear mostly in the hands of solo men (many being llama-men) and secondary men in ceremonial scenes.

Rectangular back plates with trophy heads attached to them occur on a main male character and four secondary male personages, all belonging to the same vase (Figure 1). This vessel is quite exceptional in the whole sample of Recuay ceramics, as the other seven secondary men wear underskirts (see above). A rectangular plate occurs once more on a solo man with a cup in his hands. This personage is represented larger in size than is normally the case, wears a fez¹⁰ and a large collar and is also represented in a seated-position, much like the stone monoliths from Huaraz. As rectangular back plates occur frequently on stone sculptures, but only occasionally on ceramics, I assume them to be associated with rather specific men, acting in very specific rituals.

Aside from the ones appearing on the back plates (Figure 1), trophy heads occur twice among secondary male personages in a ceremonial scene inside a house and once in the hands of a solo man also holding a knife. Trophy heads are an exceptional occurrence on Recuay ceramics, certainly in comparison with their frequent appearance on stone sculptures. As was the case for the rectangular back plates, it is assumed that they occur only on special personages, some of which are secondary characters.

Staffs are never associated with women. They mostly occur in the hands of llama-men and painted men, but do occur occasionally on secondary male characters. Two secondary male personages on different parts of buildings and two secondary male characters in a ceremonial scene hold a staff.

As will be explained further on, secondary male personages on different parts of buildings had, according to me, a guardian-function, which explains the staffs in their hands.

9 An underskirt is the result of a personage wearing two tunics of which the upper one is shorter than the bottom one. The bottom one sticks out from beneath the upper tunic.

10 Fezzes are hats with sides expanding outwards.



Figure 1. Secondary men with rectangular plates on their backs (VA 4778, © Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, photo: Claudia Obrocki).

Musical instruments are never associated with secondary personages, either male or female, as is the case for bags and animals.

Up until this point, only the objects found in the hands of secondary men have been described. Among the secondary female characters carrying objects, only three attributes can be recognised: turbans, shells and cups.

Turbans are carried solely by secondary personages. One male and one female personage can be recognised on two different vessels. Both hold the same type of turban, which is a rather simple headdress (a turban with a small crescent), mostly worn by secondary men. The two secondary personages holding these turbans wear attributes similar to the other secondary characters. Apparently, carrying a turban was not a task performed by people of primary importance within ceremonies.

Shells are solely associated with secondary female personages. Again, these women are similar to the other secondary females holding objects. It seems that carrying shells was a task that could be performed by the same type of women holding a cup or a turban.

The objects most commonly found in the hands of secondary female personages are cups. Of the secondary females 44 % have a cup in their hands, while only 12 % of the secondary males hold one. Compared to the solo and main personages (8 % of the men and 30 % of the women), secondary females are more often associated with cups.

To conclude, it can be stated that secondary personages have less decorated headgear-types and clothing styles. The headdresses among secondary men are rather simple and consist mostly of turbans with crescents. The earplugs often lack designs, and the women never wear elevated *mantas*. Very few women have *tupu*-pins, and very few secondary personages wear necklaces, bracelets, body stripes, underskirts or hems. None of the secondary personages have figurative motifs on their clothes, and geometric motifs are rather exceptional. Finally, layered garments are completely absent, and women wear belts that often lack motifs or have simple ones (dots, zigzags, horizontal or vertical stripes).

Hierarchy between the sexes

The lower qualitative value of the clothes and the auxiliary positions imply either a lower ceremonial status or less important functions for these secondary characters. It is therefore noteworthy that there are five times less women represented as main or solo characters¹¹ and two and a half times more women represented as secondary personages than men.¹² Moreover, women are mostly represented holding cups and surrounding the central, larger man, who – in addition to cups – may also hold other objects. The resemblances in clothing style and association with certain attributes between the solo women with cups and the secondary women with cups, on the one hand, and the similarities between the solo men with cups and the main men with cups, on the other, seem to imply that the effigy vessels depicting men with cups are in fact larger representations of the central male figures in ceremonial scenes, while the effigy vessels showing the women with cups are larger images of the secondary female personages with cups. Therefore, while there are already so many more solo and main male personages than female ones, this evidence suggests that even the larger solo women with cups are of a lesser ceremonial importance. The secondary male personages with cups, however, seem to have attributes and clothing styles resembling those of the secondary female figures, which suggest that both secondary men and secondary women holding cups probably shared the same function and low status in ceremonies. It should be noted, however, that the appearance of secondary men with cups is much less common than secondary

11 In my sample, I counted 364 solo male personages and 130 main male characters. Women occur five times less often than men (46 times) or solo personages (46 times).

12 In my sample there were 277 secondary female and 107 secondary male personages.

women with cups. Only 12 % of the secondary men are associated with cups, while 44 % of the secondary women are.

Functions of men and women

In what follows, I will elaborate on some of the functions of men and women, discernible in Recuay iconography. I chose to select the seven most prominent functions, more specifically: warriors, musicians, shell-bearers, cup-bearers, child-carriers, children and couples in copulation scenes:

Warriors

Warriorhood was an important aspect of Recuay society, and warriors are often represented on ceramics. In general, warriors can be recognised based on their association with helmets, weapons, (such as clubs, shields, staffs, rectangular back plates, trophy heads and knives), and perhaps also with snake appendages on their clothes. In my research, a hierarchical difference has been noticed between the different types of warriors.



Figure 2. Llama-man (© Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Bruxelles, photo: Alexandra Cromphout).

Llama-men: The highest position was taken by the llama-men (Figure 2), who wear apparel which clearly set them apart. Out of a total of 506 ceramics, 28 represent persons accompanied by a llama, all of whom are men. It seems to me that men leading a llama by a cord had an important place in ceremonial life and probably even in society as a whole. In the whole sample of Recuay ceramics, they are the personages wearing the most elaborate headdresses and garments. Fezzes, the three-cornered hat¹³ (Figure 3), the owl-crescent¹⁴ (Figure 4), underskirts, layered garments, hems and notched earspools (Figure 5) occur most frequently among this specific scene-group.

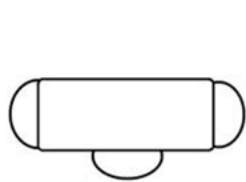


Figure 3. Three-cornered hat (drawing: Alexandra Cromphout).

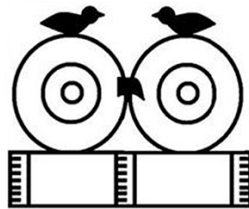


Figure 4. Owl-crescent (drawing: Alexandra Cromphout).

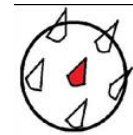


Figure 5. Notched earspool (drawing: Alexandra Cromphout).

The attributes associated with these men could give an indication of their function. As the name of the scene-group suggests, all these men are represented next to a llama. Two of these figures also hold a smaller llama in their hands.

I follow the opinion of Lau (Lau 2002: 297-298; Lau 2006: 123, 125; Lau 2008: 1038; Lau 2010c: 263-264, 275), in which he states that these vessels do not represent mere pastoral scenes. They must have had a specific relation to religious and ceremonial life.

The economy of the Recuay was concentrated on the breeding of llamas. Llamas supplied food, wool for textiles, hide, bones for certain tools and dung for fuel. Their capacity to carry rather large and heavy volumes over long distances, as well as their ability to manoeuvre the narrow mountain passes quite easily, made them the perfect beasts of burden. Corrals were found throughout the Ancash heartland, as well as on the valley slopes of the Pacific. Long-distance exchange activities were in place between the Recuay and coastal people (Amat Olazábal 2003: 98-99; Lau 2006: 131; Laurencich-Minelli & Wegner 2001: 26, 28). Llamas were thus crucial to the Recuay economy. Consequently,

¹³ The three-cornered hat consists of a turban with three vertical projections at regular intervals (mostly two on the side and one in the middle of the front part of the turban).

¹⁴ A turban with two big circles on top.

rearing must have been a constant occupation, carried out with care. An example of this constant care is visible in the burial of *conopas* or *illas* near corrals in order to increase the fertility of the herds. *Conopas* or *illas* are small llama-effigies (as found in Queyash Alto and Yayno) which were filled when an opening was present on the top, or rubbed with coca leaves, llama fat or liquids such as *chicha* (Wegner 2011: 13).

The importance of llamas for Recuay economy and the prominence of rituals to increase fertility of the herds seem to suggest that the representations of llama-men could be explained within a fertility ceremony. The elaborately decorated garments and headdresses these men wear seem to underscore the importance of these ceremonies and the people acting within them. We are probably dealing here with a key figure in society (a chief, an important priest or a person who exercised both offices), who, at certain periods of the year, conducted a ritual, perhaps a sacrifice of a llama, in order to encourage fertility and health amongst the herds by imploring the corresponding divinities or ancestors. The occasional presence of a calf in these scenes strengthens this interpretation.

An additional function of these rituals could have been the promotion of new leaders. In these fertility rituals, leaders exercised their authority over one of the most important economic activities in Recuay society: the camelid herds.

Since warriorhood was another way of showing off power and prestige, the political factor of these ceremonies is reinforced by the strong presence of weapons in the iconography (shields appear ten times, clubs seven times and staffs seven times). The llama-men probably combined the functions of a chief with priestly functions. It is not clear whether these men were active in combat, or whether their function as warriors was merely ceremonial. It is obvious, however, that the llama-men were not common warriors. Their headgear and clothing style are far more luxurious than those of the traditional representations of Recuay warriors or guardians and indicate a position higher up on the ceremonial and social ladder.

Gero (1992: 21) interprets the staffs in the hands of llama-men as being symbols of authority. Nevertheless, in my investigations, staffs are always associated with warrior-related persons and/or scenes. Staffs also occur on smaller secondary characters wearing simple headgear and clothes, which contradicts the interpretation of staffs as being merely political symbols.

The occurrence of panpipes (four times) among llama-men is also significant. As we will see further on, musical instruments are often associated with men holding weapons. Musicians and warriors seem to have had a special relationship. From the Inca Empire, we know that musicians often accompanied the troops into battle in order to generate fear among the enemy and courage among the own forces (Bolaños 1985: 53-54; Bolaños 2007: 132, 185). Musical instruments are never associated with secondary

personages and could thus be interpreted as attributes belonging to persons with a very specific function and probably a high social position. The association of llama-men with panpipes again confirms their special status and function.

Cups are the most common attributes held by Recuay persons on ceramics. Interestingly, llama-men are one of the only scene-groups that are never associated with them. Cups seem to have had special functions in ceremonies, and their presence suggests libation and/or drinking rituals. Apparently, llama-men only presented llamas during ceremonies. They were not the main actors in the drinking and/or libation acts of which Recuay ceremonies often consisted. Perhaps the presentation of llamas was a completely separate ritual, or maybe leading a llama to sacrifice was a different episode of a larger ceremony of which libation and drinking acts were part. Another important observation that should be made here is that the possibility exists that the llama-men are the same men as the main characters in ceremonial scenes, but clothed differently. This possibility, however, does not necessarily refute the interpretation of llama-men being more important in ceremonial rituals than the other men. Even if the llama-men were in real life the same persons as the ones acting in libation rituals, they clearly differentiated themselves during certain rituals by exhibiting completely different attributes and wearing completely different clothes.

Solo and main men with weapons: On a second plane of the hierarchical ladder, we recognise the solo (Figure 6) and main men with weapons, who resemble each other. Their larger scale and central position clearly differs in comparison with the secondary men. Moreover, their headdresses (associated with, amongst others, feline heads, human faces and snakes) and garment-types are more elaborately decorated (for example, they have body stripes painted on their limbs, wear necklaces, and often have figurative and geometric motifs painted on their clothes). Llama-men with weapons, on the other hand, wear even more specific and elaborately decorated clothes than the solo and main men. This indicates the intermediate social position of the solo and main men between the llama-men and the secondary men with weapons.



Figure 6. Solo man with a shield (VA 4769, © Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, photo: Claudia Obrocki).

Secondary men with weapons: The secondary male personages with weapons have been placed on the bottom of the hierarchical ladder. As was mentioned at the beginning of this paper, secondary personages are considered to be of lesser importance. They wear headdresses and garments with less decoration. They are also smaller in size and are placed in auxiliary positions.

Secondary males with weapons occur mostly in the scene-group of secondary personages on different parts of a building (Figure 7). The secondary characters in this scene-group seem to have had a different function from the more common secondary personages surrounding a central male character. This scene group possesses rather special garments and headdresses. For example, they are the only secondary personages wearing helmets, and the only secondary person with body stripes belongs to this scene-group. Furthermore, they are the secondary characters of which the highest percentage are associated with weapons and two of the only six secondary personages with hems belong to this group. In addition to the aforementioned factors, this scene group's infrequent association with cups, and their positioning on roofs, stairways or looking out of windows of architectural constructions in which libation or drinking rituals are

taking place (as if they are positioned on the places offering the best visibility possible in order to protect the people inside the buildings), also indicate a protective function for these personages. However, even if I recognise that these secondary persons on different parts of buildings are different from the more common secondary male characters, I still perceive their status to be lower than that of the main and solo men. They are still represented as smaller than the latter, and their garments, although they differ in some ways from those of the common secondary males, still contain less decoration. In my opinion, the unusual garment-styles and headdresses among the secondary personages on different parts of buildings can be explained by their different function. The secondary men with cups are clearly participants in a libation and/or drinking ritual, while the secondary personages on the outer parts of buildings were probably guardians.



Figure 7. Secondary men holding weapons on different parts of a building (PAM1258, © Comune di Milano. Museo delle Culture – Milano).

Musicians

Music often accompanied the Recuay rituals and llama-men were often associated with musical instruments. In my sample, 23 men and one woman were associated with musical instruments.



Figure 8. Solo man with a panpipe (VA 4729, © Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, photo: Claudia Obrocki).

Apart from the four llama-men with panpipes in their hands, whom as previously mentioned are men of a high social importance, clothes and headdresses seem to imply an average status for musicians. It is worth mentioning, however, that secondary personages are never associated with musical instruments.

The rather high amount of helmets among musicians is, according to me, to be explained by the fact that musicians often had a function as warriors. Men with weapons are often associated with musical instruments in Recuay iconography. The possibility exists that musicians accompanied the troops into battle, wearing similar clothes and headgear. Perhaps the helmets and weapons worn by musicians had just a protective function, or maybe musicians also took part in fighting battles. In Moche iconography, musicians are often represented together with warriors, and ethnohistorical documents mention musical instruments being played on the battlefield in the Inca Empire (Bolaños 1985: 53-54; Bolaños 2007: 77, 185, 132).

Among the Recuay, as is also the case in other pre-Columbian cultures, men are mostly associated with musical instruments. In my Recuay sample, solely men are represented with wind instruments in their hands, while one woman with a hand drum was recognised. Among the Moche, Nasca and other cultures, wind instruments and drums are mostly shown in the hands of men (Bolaños 1985, 2007). Ethnohistorical records, however, mention the *acllas* and *coyas* playing hand drums (Arriaga 1968: ch. 5) and the drawings of Guamán Poma de Ayala (2011: 182, 184, 184) often depict women playing drums. It seems as though men are generally associated with the whole range of musical instruments, while women had in certain time periods a specific relationship with hand drums.

Shell-bearers

Thirteen secondary female personages have a shell in their hands. Four of these occur in copulation scenes, while the others are secondary characters in ceremonial scenes often containing personages holding cups. Shells thus had some importance during drinking and/or libation rituals, as well as during copulation scenes, although their rather modest rate of appearance (six out of a total of 506 vessels) contradicts that they were frequently part of daily ceremonial activities.

All shell-bearers are women and secondary characters. As previously mentioned, secondary personages seem to have been of lesser importance in iconographical representations. The clothes and attributes associated with the shell-bearing secondary women are all typical of secondary female personages and consequently confirm the likelihood of their lower ceremonial status. The presence of shells imported from the coast probably heightened the social significance of the religious activities during which they were used. However, based on the garments and attributes of the personages carrying shells, it can be concluded that shell-bearers did not have an important religious position. Apparently, all the secondary female characters had more or less the same, rather low, position in ceremonies, independent of the objects they were holding.

I am of the opinion that the shells carried by these women are *spondylus*. In, for example, Queyash Alto this type of shell was found in the so-called residential part of the site (Gero 1991: 132-134; Gero 1992: 17-18), and the shells held by the secondary female personages closely resemble these bivalve shells. *Spondylus* shells were also found in other pre-Columbian cultures, mostly in tombs or other highly ritualised contexts. At Chavín de Huantar, for example, *spondylus* were found in the Gallery of the Offerings in the Old Temple. At Kuntur Wasi (750-500 BC), beads and *spondylus* fragments were encountered in a burial site. At Sipan (AD 50-700), shells were found in tombs of men, while in the cemetery of Pacatnamu (Moche III, AD 400-500), beads made of *spondylus* were placed in tombs of women and children. In San Jose de Moro (AD 550-700), the famous priestesses held *spondylus* shells in their hands. The Sacrifice Ceremony painted

on certain Moche pots, again depicts women who carry *spondylus* shells in their hands (Carter 2011: 71-73).

Ethnohistorical texts and contemporary Andean agricultural practices indicate a relationship between *spondylus* and agricultural fertility and water in the Inca Empire. *Spondylus* shells were used in water rituals and were referred to as 'daughters of the sea'. In the Chimú reign, a similar relation may be recognised, as *spondylus* offerings were found in a well in the Ciudadela Tschudi at Chan Chan and near a cultivated field of the Chimú period in the La Poza area of Huanchaco (Cordy-Collins 2001: 39-40; Pillsbury 1996: 318, 323).

What is clear from all of this is that in many of the pre-Columbian cultures there existed a clear affinity between *spondylus* shells on the one hand and agricultural fertility, water and high status on the other. The presence of shells in copulation and libation scenes could indicate a similar relationship with fertility and water during the Recuay period.

Cup-bearers

As previously mentioned, both men and women can carry cups in their hands. Person-ages with cups occur in the centre of ceremonial scenes (Figure 9), in auxiliary positions surrounding the central person (Figure 9) and as solo individuals on effigy vessels. Consequently, cups are part of many different iconographic situations. The presence of cups probably refers to ceremonies in which drinking and libation was a key act.



Figure 9. Ceremonial scene of a main man and a secondary woman with cups in their hands (VA 48276, © Ethnologisches Museum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, photo: Claudia Obrocki).

As mentioned before, I am of the opinion that the solo effigy vessels of men and women with cups in their hands are larger representations of the smaller main and secondary personages acting in ceremonial scenes (see also Lau 2000: 184). Based on the similar clothes and headdress-styles, there seem to exist similarities between the solo women with cups, the main females with cups and the secondary female characters, on the one hand, and between the solo men and the main men with cups, on the other (for a detailed description of the similarities among personages carrying cups, see Cromphout 2013/14). Secondary male characters with cups seem to have had similar ceremonial functions and positions as the secondary females.

To conclude, one can state that women holdings cups, no matter their size or position in a ceremonial scene, were all of a rather low ceremonial status. Nevertheless, their presence within ceremonies must have been crucial. Their common occurrence as cup-bearers was indispensable for the rituals depicted in the iconography.

Child-carriers

In my sample of Recuay ceramics, there are seven solo women with a child in their hands. These women wear rather elaborately decorated clothes. Two wear elevated *mantas*, while six have painted or tattooed designs on their faces. Six also wear *tupus*. Three have bracelets and all of the women wear belts. Two belts are decorated with snakes and two have a step-design. Both belts are rather exceptional among Recuay ceramics, and they are associated with women holding a special function. One of these women has a feline painted on her clothes, while another's features snakes. As mentioned before, it is rather exceptional to see figurative motifs among women. Three women have stripes painted or tattooed on their limbs. A rather large amount of geometric motifs are also present on the clothes. All these elements are in favour of attributing a rather special religious status to women holding children.

In Moche iconography, children are mostly carried by women or feminised personages (e.g. female bats, female skeletons). Often these representations take place within a sphere of death and sacrifice (Bourget 2001: 103). No definite conclusions can be made surrounding the sacrifice of children within Recuay society. Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that a similar concept of fertility can be accorded to the presence of children in certain rituals, even if these rituals are not sacrificial. Children, certainly when associated with women or copulation scenes, clearly refer to birth, the continuity of the lineage and fertility as a whole (Gero 1992: 20; Gero 1999: 34).

Children

A total of ten children (seven in the hands of solo women and three lying next to a copulating couple, see Figure 11) are recognised. The children represented in the arms of women lack headdresses, earplugs, *tupus*, belts, necklaces and bracelets. This could mean that these elements were either assigned later on in life or that these children did not display attributes associated with high ceremonial status.

Two children, however, have a particular design painted or tattooed on their faces. This design is typical for women.

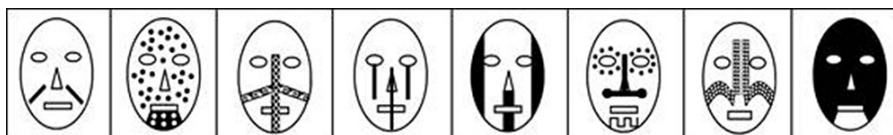


Figure 10. Female face design (drawing: Alexandra Cromphout).

There is one more vessel from the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne (Figure 11) that probably also is depicting children. This vessel shows a copulation scene with three smaller persons lying on the side. Normally, secondary personages are represented in a standing position, usually holding some sort of object in their hands to represent their active participation in the ceremony. The fact that these characters are represented as lying on their backs, having their hands free of objects, and being associated with a copulation scene, I am inclined to interpret these three personages as children.

Copulation scenes probably refer to fertility, in which offspring naturally are of importance. In this regard, the presence of calves in the hands of men leading a llama by a cord should be mentioned. These scenes probably depict fertility rituals, in which calves symbolise the continuity within the herds. In a similar fashion, the smaller persons lying next to the copulating couple could also be regarded as symbolising the continuity of the cultural lineage.

Two of the three smaller personages are clearly of the female sex because a vagina is visible. The third secondary character could also be identified a female based on its clothes and attributes. All three wear *mantas* and belts whose styles are regularly associated with secondary women. None of the three have *tupus*, necklaces, bracelets or face-designs. Again, it seems that children wore attributes and garments associated with secondary personages whom, according to me, had rather low status positions in ceremonies.

Half of these children in my sample of recuay ceramics are definitely of female sex. The sex of the other five children is unidentifiable. The reason for depicting mainly, or

perhaps only, female children on Recuay ceramics is still unclear. A possible interpretation could be that the female sex of these children emphasised the importance of fertility to an even greater degree, as women are the life givers par excellence.

Couples in copulation scenes

Out of a total of 506 six vessels, 21 represent copulation scenes (Figure 11). These always depict a central couple consisting of a man and a woman, who are sometimes surrounded by smaller, but always female, personages. The latter generally carry cups in their hands, although shells can be held as well. In some instances the scene takes place within an architectural setting.



Figure 11. Copulating couple and three children lying next to them (RJM 60388, © Rheinisches Bildarchiv Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, photo: Wolfgang F. Meier).

The male-female pair often has a similar clothing style, which confirms their significance as a couple. Three of the couples are naked, and when they have stripes painted on their limbs, these are of the same style and width (Gero 2004). Both the main male personage and the main female personage wear rather intricate headgear and garments, which, I suppose, refer to their high status in ceremonies. Neither the main men nor the main women partaking in the copulation act have objects in their hands. Apparently, their sole function is one of sexual intercourse.

Conclusions

To conclude, Table 2 provides an overview of the religious status for the different personages on Recuay ceramics.

At the top of the ceremonial pyramid, stand the llama-men. Their particular head-gear, ear ornaments, garments, and their association with the Recuay's main source of wealth – llamas – sets them apart from all the other Recuay personages.

The middle level contains the solo and main warriors, the solo and main men holding cups, the musicians (the male ones and the single woman), the women holding children, and the couples in copulation scenes. Although they are larger in size than the secondary personages, they never wear clothes as elaborately decorated as those of the llama-men.

Ceremonial role/ritual status	
MEN	WOMAN
Highest level:	
llama-men	
Middle level:	
Solo/main warriors	
Solo/main men with cups	
Solo/main musicians	One solo woman with drum
	Women holding children
Couples in copulation scenes	
Lower level:	
Male guardians (secondary men on different parts of buildings)	
Secondary men with weapons	
Lowest level:	
Secondary men with cups	Secondary women with cups Solo and main women with cups
	Secondary women with shells
	Children

Table 2. Ceremonial status of the personages on Recuay ceramics.

The lower level consists of secondary men with weapons and secondary men placed on the lookout on buildings. As mentioned before, these men wear clothes that differ from those found among the secondary men holding cups. I am of the opinion that these differences are due to their role as guardians.

On the lowest level of the ceremonial hierarchy stand the secondary women with cups, as well as the main and solo women with cups who, as I have mentioned on several occasions, resemble each other in clothing style. In general, it seems that men occupied more important positions in rituals than women. The secondary men with cups, however, have garments and attributes resembling those of the secondary women. Therefore, I think we may consider secondary men with cups to have an equally low status as the secondary women. The lowest level is completed by secondary women holding shells; and children. The latter are also likely to be of the female sex.

Final remarks

The conclusions of this research reveal that ancestry was at the centre of religious life. However, since I am of the opinion that religious life was intertwined with many aspects of the social and political spheres, particularly when it comes to ancestry, I often extend my interpretations of the status and function of men and women to encompass not only religious ceremonies, but also the society as a whole.

The social significance of ancestral veneration is clearly visible in the huge amount of stone sculptures produced by the Recuay. Many of these sculptures were found near funerary architecture, which suggest their relation to death. More important evidence supporting this link is the resemblance of these monoliths to the mummy bundles that are described in ethnohistorical documents and are found at, for example, Chachapoyas (Kauffmann 1970/71). Furthermore, if we consider the profound belief in petrified ancestors in the Andes, it is not too far a stretch to regard these monoliths as being or representing ancestors (DeLeonardis & Lau 2004). In contrast with past researchers, with Tello (1929) being the first scholar to investigate the monoliths, I argue that most of the Recuay sculptures represent men (Cromphout 2013/14). This would mean that even if stone uprights (*huancas*) were perceived in Inca and colonial times as depicting both men and women, among the Recuay, men were most likely at the centre of the veneration of lithomorphosised ancestors.

The archaeological record confirms the existence of ancestral celebrations in the Recuay culture. At Queyash Alto (Huarás and Early Recuay period), ceremonies took place in the main plaza, during which *chicha*¹⁵ and llama-meat were consumed. Based on the discovery of flutes, it is highly probable that music enlivened these celebrations

¹⁵ Maize beer.

(Fitzhugh 1989; Gero 1990; Gero 1992). At Chinchawas, rituals were first enacted during the Late Recuay period in enclosures in the central part of the site. Later, these ceremonies moved to locations near *chullpa*-tombs in the Middle Horizon. In this evidence, we recognise a probable shift from public, small-scale ceremonies to even more restricted rituals, which was concentrated to a greater extent on the particular descent group to which one belonged. It appears, thus, that ancestry rose in importance over time. At Chinchawas, as was the case in Queyash Alto, these rituals seem to have centred on drinking and libation rituals, for many bowls and camelid bones were found (Lau 2002; Lau 2010b).

Ethnohistorical documents (Cieza de León 1968; Cobo 1964; Doyle 1988; Duviols 1986; Estete 1968; Martínez Cereceda 1995) provide information about the belief in petrified ancestors and the ceremonies organised in their honour in order to implore fertility for the herds, the fields and the people. From these documents, we can deduce that music often accompanied the festivities and that *chicha* and llamas were the principal offerings. Further, these offerings are exactly the same ones that were found in the archaeological record and can therefore give an indication of the meaning of the iconographical representations on ceramics as well.

According to me, the ceramics represent the religious world of the Recuay, in which ceremonies centred on appealing to the divinities and/or ancestors for fertility were key. As most of these vessels were found in funerary contexts, an association with ancestry and fertility seems to clearly manifest itself.

Evidently, drinking and libation rituals are one of the most important ceremonies represented on Recuay vessels (Figure 9). First, the vessels' form as *pacchas* indicate their use for libations (Carrión Cachot 1955). Second, most of the figures on the ceramics carry cups in their hands. Further, some personages even carry big vessels on their backs, which I perceive to be storage and/or transport vessels for *chicha* that were used during the libation ceremonies (see also Lau 2006: 126). From ethnohistorical documents, we do know that libation rituals were intended to nourish the earth (Mariscotti de Gorlitz 1978) and increase the fertility of the fields.

Other scenes clearly indicate that the community's fertility was one of the main concerns among the Recuay. In this sample, 21 copulation scenes were recognised. These scenes often take place within an architectural setting with onlookers being regularly represented as well. Furthermore, the male-female couple at the centre of such scenes wears elaborately decorated clothes. This seems to imply that these copulation scenes do not represent daily activities, but instead depict highly ritualised ceremonies during which the vital religious status of the central couple was emphasised (Gero 1999: 38; Gero 2004). The central couple is sometimes surrounded by smaller secondary personages. Interestingly, these witnesses are always of the female sex. In other scene groups, secondary personages can be male, which makes the explicit link with the female sex in

the copulation scenes even more meaningful. Could this overtly female presence refer to their capacity as life-givers? Often, these secondary women carry cups or shells in their hands. The relation between libations and fertility has already been explained. Shells, however, are also recognised for their significance within fertility rituals, mostly in their association with water and agricultural fruitfulness (see above). In one copulation scene (Figure 11), the continuity of the lineage is to an even greater extent implied by the presence of three (female) children.

Children are not often represented on Recuay ceramics. Apart from the three children lying next to a copulating couple, just seven are found held by women on effigy vessels. The presentation of children by women appears to indicate, once again, that ensuring the continuity of the descent group was a prime concern for the Recuay.

As mentioned before, llamas were one of the main sources of wealth among the Recuay (Amat Olazábal 2003; Lau 2006; Laurencich-Minelli & Wegner 2001). Therefore, the association of llamas with men wearing clothes and displaying attributes (Figure 2) found almost exclusively within this particular scene-group appears to indicate a ceremonial, perhaps even sacrificial, significance rather than a pastoral one (Lau 2002: 297-298; Lau 2006: 125). I am of the opinion that this scene-group, which I refer to as the llama-men, shows a ceremony aimed at augmenting the herds and ensuring fertility among the animals. An element in favour of this interpretation is the smaller llama (perhaps a calf) on display in the hands of two of the men accompanied by a llama. As was the case for the copulation scenes, in which children sometimes are represented, these calves could also have been a reference to the highly desired offspring.

Ethnohistorical documents and archaeological excavations (e.g., at Queyash Alto) indicate the use of musical instruments during the ceremonial celebrations. The presence of panpipes (Figure 8), flutes and one hand drum in my sample of vessels seems to confirm this information.

Besides ancestry and fertility, it seems that warriorhood – one of the chief ways to gain social respect and power – was an important aspect of Recuay life as well. The fortifications found at, for example, Yayno (Lau 2010a) confirm this hypothesis, as do the many stone sculptures associated with weaponry. The warrior-related imagery on monoliths also indicates that one of the ways to attain ancestral status was by having exercised exceptional skills or shown courage on the battle field.

At the centre of many ceremonies depicted on the ceramics stand men, sometimes portrayed as warriors. It seems that ceramics did not merely represent ceremonies, but were also a means through which leaders could exhibit, and thus increase, their power (Lau 2002: 297-298; Lau 2006: 125). By showing off their central positions in rituals and by perhaps referring to themselves as the organisers of these festivities and the main providers of food and drink, these chiefs made Recuay ceramics into ever-lasting memories of male power.

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