

GUAMAN POMA
Writing and Resistance in
Colonial Peru

Second Edition, with a new introduction

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Introduction

In the pages that follow I have attempted to perform an act of decolonization in the forum of historical literary scholarship. My work began as a response to the writers and commentators of Spanish American literary history who summarily dismissed the writings of the small handful of ethnic Americans who were, in effect, members of the first generation of Latin American writers. This dismissal had everything to do with the fact that these early authors were native Americans whose ethnic roots reached deep into the pre-Columbian soil of the New World. Marginalized politically and socially in their own lifetimes, they occasionally took up the pen to launch a counteroffensive. Their traditional native oral cultures did not prepare them for written expression in European tongues, and their political self-interest often distorted their accounts of ancient history. As a result, these native voices were marginalized for a second time by the world of literary scholarship.¹ Yet these proud and desperate individuals had lived through the first, critical moments of Spanish American cultural and political history and they had engaged in a process of decolonization in which the territories to be recovered were not only geographical but also spiritual and historical.² What they had to say—and especially how they went about saying it—constitutes a fascinating chapter in the history of the confrontation of the Western world with the rest of the world.

The story I want to tell concerns one person's engagement with the European language of the foreign conqueror, and particularly with the many discursive formations that made up the European world of letters at the time. My project is to reconstruct the ways in which a native American (in this case, Andean) author of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala,³ translated his experience into the language of the other. What I want to know is how the literary subject took up the challenge of cross-cultural communication in the first hundred years after the Spanish invasion and conquests in the New World.

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A consideration fundamental to Guaman Poma's efforts, and to my own in this study, is the fact that he wrote his *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* [1615] explicitly for King Philip III of Spain.⁴ The Peruvian author was painfully aware of the difficulties of communicating across barriers linguistic and cultural. Shaping the rhetoric of his discourse were his experiences with the juridical, historical, and religious literature of the Spanish Golden Age and his expectations about his designated reader or *destinatario*.

History Writing and Polemic

Before turning to the ethnic Andean's writing, a few words are in order about the historical and historiographical context in which his work appeared. At the time of the production of the second wave of *Crónicas de Indias* in the seventeenth century, historiography, like history itself, had changed its orientation. Conquest efforts had subsided, leaving fantastic and historical events to intermingle in the popular imagination. As a result, the chronicles of New World history then being produced were re-workings, even plagiarisms, of previous chronicles, or oblique remembrances of deeds long past (Esteve Barba 1964:19). Nevertheless, the aspiration—or pretense—of discovering and communicating objective truths in history prevailed. The Renaissance norm of historical truth, the *res gestae* to which the *Crónicas de Indias* claimed to subscribe, consisted of the “unadorned reporting of things that had happened, free of distortion, addition, or omission, as though it were possible to record human actions in words as faithfully as a musical performance might be recorded by an infallible phonograph” (Nelson 1973:40).

Although adhering to this illusion, most New World chronicle literature can be called allegorical, in Hayden White's terms (1973b:261), insofar as such works were written in the service of “compulsive powers” such as religion or specific ideologies and typically drew moral implications from historical facts or reduced historical events to the status of manifestations of moral forces presumed to direct the universe. The New World chronicles were “allegorical” in this sense because they elaborated typically providentialist, imperialist versions of Spanish conquest history based on philosophies of the just war. Woven into the narrations were the greatest philosophical and practical problems generated by the discovery and colonization of the New World: first, the legal claims by which to justify the European conquest of indigenous American peoples; and, second, the methods by which to control and govern the newfound populations (Zavala [1947] 1972:19).

Within the historiographic treatise, the justifications of conquest and colonization sometimes appeared as points of contention but most often represented the distillation of particular ideological positions, which the authors attempted to impose on their readers. As a result of their pragmatic motives, the sixteenth-century chronicles of Peru can be divided into two categories: those that defended the private interests of the conquistadores and their descendants (as *relaciones* or petitions of individuals for imperial favors), and those that served the political interest of administrators concerned with governing the native populations and establishing the rights and strategies for doing so (Ossio 1976-77:193). The most well-known authors of the second group were Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa and his mentor, Francisco de Toledo. Among the many writers of the period that has come to be identified with the tenure of Viceroy Toledo (1569-1581), Sarmiento and Toledo himself are the ones most remembered for using historiographic and documentary literature as the battleground on which to press their political suits against native autonomy (Means 1928:519; see also pp. 462-497).

In like manner, the Amerindian writers presented their arguments in the guise of unadorned reporting. Their recovery of history was as fraught with personal motives and collective self-interest as were the historiographic works produced by European chroniclers—soldiers, clerks, and priests—of the generations before them.

Guaman Poma stands out as one who entered vigorously into the debate.⁵ His particular viewpoint on political matters can easily be summarized: opposing the direct rule of the foreigners, Guaman Poma lobbied for the restitution of lands and the return of traditional Andean governance. Because he was of matrilineal descent from Inca nobility, he made his claim to aristocracy on the basis of his paternal Yarovilca Allauca Huanoco lineage, which predated the “usurper” Incas of more recent times (see Tello 1942; Varallanos 1959:59-68). Rabidly anticlerical, he decried the greed of all holders of colonial office, civil as well as ecclesiastical. He defended the Andeans as civilized Christians and attacked the Spaniards as lost sinners. At the same time, he promoted the institutionalization to the Christian religion and the creation of a sovereign Andean state that would form part of a universal Christian empire presided over by the Spanish king. In short, his stance was complex but coherent and always unequivocal: in favor of native rule and opposed to colonialism, Guaman Poma was anti-Inca but pro-Andean, anticlerical but pro-Catholic.

In the articulation of his views, Guaman Poma employed a type of speech act that prevails throughout his work and has the character of a hidden polemic. In this type of discourse, as defined by Bakhtin, the

speaker implies or alludes to another person's words—without referring specifically to that prior speech act—for the expression of his or her own intention. Hidden polemic is like any single line in a dialogue insofar as it responds to a previous speech act without explicitly referring to it.⁴ Guaman Poma's engagement in hidden polemic had two consequences: on an immediate level, it allowed him to integrate into his own discourse countless attacks against contentions that he never specified and commentaries on authors whom he never named. When disentangled from his own remarks, the identification of these alien speech acts makes his own speech more intelligible. Second, the presence of hidden polemic informs and explains the compositional principles of his discourse; it is responsible for the respective roles that history writing, oratory, and fiction play in structuring his work.

The polemical thrust of Guaman Poma's book—and even its specific methods of articulation—have their precedent in earlier sixteenth-century writings, such as those of José de Acosta and Bartolomé de las Casas, with which Guaman Poma was acquainted. Both Acosta and Las Casas employed compositional strategies in which the description of phenomena and the narration of events became the proofs of the dialectical demonstration (Mignolo 1982:86). Whereas Acosta in his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* limited his argumentative structure to the examination of the works of nature, Las Casas in the *Historia apologética* offered persuasive and rhetorical as well as demonstrative, dialectical arguments in studying the works of humanity's free will (ibid.:87). Although Guaman Poma did not follow the pattern of demonstrating causes and describing effects in the learned manner of Acosta and Las Casas, he quickly discovered the potential of the apparently neutral discourse of history for embracing rhetorical arguments of persuasion.

Guaman Poma masked his intent by presenting his persuasive assertions as though they were statements of fact; he hid and disguised as simple historiographic narration his engagement in polemic. His explanation of the appearance of the first Andeans in the Indies, for example, as well as the provenance of their racial and ethnic stock and the origin of the imperial Inca, were all taken up as historical events simply recounted. Seldom did the author acknowledge that such issues were involved in a passionate debate. He nowhere gave an explanation of why he called his book the “first of the new chronicles,” yet, like Acosta, he attempted what the Jesuit considered a novel enterprise: to explain the Andean presence in the old “New World” and to write the moral history of civilized humanity in America.⁷ Bolder than Acosta, who ventured to call his own work “new” only in his prologue, Guaman Poma proclaimed the novelty of his work in its very title.

For Guaman Poma, the concept of history included its being preserved in some form; thus he lamented that the record of ancient Andean civilization consisted of “unas historias cin escriptura nenguna” (“some narrations, which were never written down”) ([1615] 1980:8).⁸ His task, he suggested, was one of translation from the oral to the written mode; his job was to pass the record from one medium to another, to transpose, not to invent or even to interpret. By calling himself a chronicler,⁹ Guaman Poma claimed a prerogative that was concerned with the public good and stood above self-interest. He qualified himself for the historian's task by proclaiming his Christian religious devotion and by asserting that his history would perform the services of all good history: namely, to provide doctrine and example by which all mortals should live. His protestations about the usefulness (“utilidad y provecho”) of his book conformed in a general way to the ethical, public goal of the writing of history.

Like his narrative stance as guardian of the public good, Guaman Poma's efforts as private petitioner relied on the illusion of historical truth that he created to disguise his polemical contentions. The idea of a *probanza de méritos*, or personal petition to the king, to seek recompense for services rendered, was explicit in Guaman Poma's appeal to King Philip III: “Agradéscame este seruicio de treinta años y de andar tan pobre, dejando mi casa y hijos y haziendas para seruir a vuestra Magestad” (“Reward me for this service of thirty years, for going about in poverty, abandoning my home and children and domestic labors in order to serve your Majesty”) (ibid.:976). It is at this level and in this context as a *carta relatoria* that Guaman Poma's work might properly be called a letter to the king (“carta al rey”), which is the epithet that has been used so often to describe it.¹⁰

Also in the general category of the *relación*, he cast the chapter of his book called “Pregunta su Magestad” (“His Majesty Inquires”)—an imaginary dialogue with the king of Spain—as the formal, official type of report presumably solicited by the monarch:

Pregunta Sacra Católica Real Magestad al autor Ayala para sauer todo lo que ay en el rreyno de las Yndias del Pirú para el buen gobierno y justicia y rremediallo de los trauajos y mala uentura y que multiprique los pobres yndios del dicho rreyno. . . . A la pregunta de su Magestad rresponde el autor y habla con su Magestad. (ibid.: 974)

(His Holy Catholic Royal Majesty inquires of Ayala, the author, in order to know about everything that exists in the kingdom of the Peruvian Indies, for the sake of good government and justice and to relieve the Indians from their travails and mis-

fortunes so that the poor Indians of the aforementioned kingdom may multiply. . . . To his Majesty's questions, the author will respond and speak to his Majesty.)

Here Guaman Poma mimics the formula of the *relación* typified in the *Relaciones geográficas de Indias* (1586) (see Jiménez de la Espada 1965). Such reports fulfilled an official obligatory function insofar as they complied with government requests for information. Often taking the form of responses to questionnaires, this type of *relación* did not subscribe to any traditional literary model but rather to the exigencies of providing data about the newly discovered lands and their peoples in an orderly fashion (Mignolo 1982:70–71).

Inventing not only his own compliance but also the official request, Guaman Poma elaborated his responses and inverted the conventional character of the *relación*. In the novel and the chronicle, forensic oratory normally served to legitimize the status of the witness as worthy and reliable (see González Echevarría 1976:28–29); as the witness created a relationship with an external authority, that authority's fictional presence in turn authorized the witness. But Guaman Poma subverted the formula when he created the king's fictional persona as an uninformed and naïve inquirer. Thus, although Guaman Poma created the figure of the sovereign, he bled it of the prestige that he transferred instead to himself; he made the character "el autor Ayala" the source of knowledge and, therefore, authority.

The *carta relatoria* and the *relación*, on the one hand, and the *crónica* and *historia* on the other, constituted two opposing, though complementary, categories within historiographic discourse. Authorial purpose differed considerably between them: the *carta* and *relación* were written out of a sense of obligation to testify and inform, whereas history and chronicle aspired to elaborate, from such data as *relaciones* could provide, the complex relationships among historical events. It is only from the perspective of the reception of all such works in this century, not from that of their original production in the sixteenth, that they may be viewed as pertaining to a single category (Mignolo 1982:59). In spite of Guaman Poma's avowal that he intended only to inform, not to interpret, he contradicted himself with the statements that reveal that he considered his work a *crónica*, not a *carta*. Although he once referred to his work as a letter ([1615] 1980:975), he commonly called it a "libro y corónica," and twice requested its publication:

Y la dicha merced pide y suplica para cienpre de la dicha ynpreción a su Magestad, del dicho libro conpuesto por el dicho autor, don Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala,

señor y *capac apo*, ques príncipes, pues que lo merese de la dicha auilidad y trauajo. (Ibid.:11; see also p. 7)

(And he requests and petitions the aforementioned favor of his Majesty, of the said impression, forever, of the said book composed by the aforementioned author, Don Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, lord and powerful *Apu*, which means prince, because he deserves it for his aforementioned talents and labors.)

Thus Guaman Poma moved one step farther away from the notion of responsive, externally motivated testimony (*carta relatoria*) and one step closer to that of assertive, formally executed discourse (*crónica*).

Although Guaman Poma obviously had aspirations for his work as a formal treatise, it is difficult to place his book definitively in the field of either the public, historiographic enterprise or the informal, private citizen's *relación*. This is the case because his work is organized as a succession of three distinct parts. His *Nueva crónica* consists of the story of ancient Peru from the biblical Creation to the reign of the Inca Huayna Capac (ibid.:1-369). Subsequently, the chapter called "Conquista," which begins with the arrival of the first Spaniards to Peru and ends with the conclusion of the Spaniards' civil wars after the conquest, is a separate unit (ibid.: 370-437); see his table of contents, p. 1182). The remaining two-thirds of the book, the *Buen gobierno*, is a synchronic and exhaustive description of life in the Peruvian viceroyalty (ibid.:438-1189). This portion of the work consists not of the recording of great and memorable deeds, but rather of the account of everyday occurrences to which Guaman Poma claimed eyewitness testimony.

It is in the *Buen gobierno* that Guaman Poma appealed to the conventional notion of historical truth as a literal account of events that actually happened. The notion of historical truth pertained to "the kind of correspondence that should obtain between the testimony of a witness in a courtroom and the events he describes" (Nelson 1973:1). In such a manner, Guaman Poma materialized the spirit of the courtroom and the spectacle of the witness presenting himself to a presiding authority. This occurs not only in the dialogue with the king but throughout the detailed descriptions of the colonizers' exploitation of the native population. In the same attitude, the Andean author copied out letters and legal documents and inserted them into his work. Applicable here is the juridical definition of the *relación* as that "brief and succinct report made publicly to a judge, orally or in writing, about the facts of a particular case" (see *Diccionario de autoridades* [1726-37] 1964:3:556).

On the other hand, neither the *Nueva crónica* ([1615] 1980:1-369) nor

the chapter called "Conquista" (ibid.:370-437) can qualify as a *relación*. Guaman Poma could not vouch personally for the experience of his people from the time of the legendary arrival in the Indies of one of the sons of Noah, nor did he have firsthand experience of the Spanish invasion and conquest of Tawantinsuyu.¹¹ Furthermore, he did not adhere to the established criteria for determining historical truth. What happened instead, as I shall demonstrate later, is that the events of history became the unstable elements in both the narrations of the *Nueva corónica* and "Conquista." Factual accounts dissolved as Guaman Poma abandoned the exegesis of history to move in another direction. Calling into question the teleological and ethical dimensions of historical events, he examined meaning and morality and framed his own literary response.

Challenging the Canon

Guaman Poma's claim to the generic definition of his work as a chronicle is significant in light of his political intent. Yet the issue of genre raises questions that extend beyond his own immediate literary experience to focus on the creative acts that constituted and attended the birth of the Spanish American literary consciousness. Stated in the most comprehensive terms, the question that I seek to answer is what aspects of literary canon and convention became the conditions that made possible the debut of the literary subject that was uniquely and self-consciously both Hispanic and American.

The implications of my study of Guaman Poma's book concern literature, but literature in its relationship to society. His encounter with the world of letters, which he first viewed as an avenue of political intervention in colonial affairs when all traditional channels for social participation were closed to him, ultimately became a lost cause. This is evidenced in his dizzying and desperate movement from one generic formula to another to recount history and argue for colonial reform. The result is an exposition that turns inside out the discourses of the *Siglo de Oro*, deemphasizing their esthetic qualities and drawing attention to their social implications as instruments of political power. It should be evident by the end of my examination that Guaman Poma implicitly offered a critique of European discursive formations insofar as he revealed their inability to represent fully social reality or serve the cause of justice.

The study that follows begins with the problem of Guaman Poma's version of the Spanish conquest of Peru in the light of the written histories with which he was familiar. He contradicted his documentary sources and elaborated a fictionalized narration of events that had much

more to do with his own political arguments than with the rigorous demands of writing history. My investigation of Guaman Poma's chronicle in comparison with the juridical treatises on the rights of conquest leads me to argue that his rewriting of history was based on the primarily Dominican expression of the philosophy of the just war.

Chapter 2 further explores Guaman Poma's approach to historiographic issues by examining his use of the literary biography to narrate the lives of the Incas. Instead of writing a chronicle of Andean history, he wove, through the biographies of the Incas and his version of the conquest, an epic tale of Andean experience. Inasmuch as the *Nueva corónica* followed the epic formula as an "imitación de historia," this first part of his work may be considered among the first attempts to create the epic saga of Spanish America. Yet the distance from the exemplary biography to moralist literature was but one short step, and a consideration of the nineteen "prologues" that conclude many of the chapters of the book brings up the issue of religious literature.

In chapter 3, I approach what I consider to be the major result of this investigation, namely, the discovery of how prominent a role the literature of religious conversion played in Guaman Poma's work and, by analogy, how largely such catechisms and sermons published in Amerindian languages must have loomed on the literary horizon of the entire social class of *indios ladinos*, or ethnic Americans literate in Castilian. By exploring the extent to which ecclesiastical rhetoric entered into the articulation of the new American voice, I hope to have illuminated that moment when the native elite encountered for the first time the literature of the conquerors. I am convinced that those religious writings—not the juridical or the historiographic treatises—provoked Guaman Poma's entrance into the polemic on the nature of the New World natives and the rights by which to govern them; the catechisms and *sermonarios* were the immediate sources of the contentions against which he found it necessary to defend his race.

As I pursued the problem of the generic identification of his work, it became apparent that the principal issue was not history versus fiction, but rather, ecclesiastical rhetoric versus poetics. Tracing the way the inner teleology that animates the *Nueva corónica* as an epic construct breaks down, I argue that the sermon intrudes on, and finally overwhelms, Guaman Poma's efforts to create an epic story.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the varying degrees to which Guaman Poma's drawings corroborate and contradict the written texts they accompany. The question I seek to answer is whether visual representation frees the author/artist from the European historiographic and literary conventions that he manipulates in writing. Analyzing spatial composition on the

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pictorial field, and examining certain codes of iconographic representation as carriers of allegorical pictorial meaning, I contend that these drawings corroborate the ultimate implications of the written text. Through pictures and prose, Guaman Poma declares that there is no point of productive contact between European and Andean cultures; each remains hopelessly separate from the other, and understanding between the two is impossible. The examination of narrational point of view that closes this study serves as a summary of Guaman Poma's position: standing proud but isolated within his own cultural sphere, the author quixotically presents himself as the hero of an encounter in which his opponent does not understand the terms of the engagement or the stakes of the challenge.

The present challenge is to describe Guaman Poma's mostly unexamined excursion into the world of letters, all the while remembering that it is only a part, although a significant one, of his story.

1. Contradicting the Chronicles of Conquest

Guaman Poma claimed that one of his principal objectives in writing the *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* was to retell the history of the Spanish invasion and conquest of Peru. He knew that period of history from two sources: the oral traditions of his own people, and the written accounts of Spanish historians, which had already been published abroad. His own rewriting of the events in question was informed not only by his ethnic Andean perspective, but also, and significantly, by a European philosophy of conquest that allowed him to express his views in a way that was intelligible and acceptable to outsiders. To evaluate Guaman Poma's key assertions about the Spanish conquest of Peru in the light of the political polemic on which they drew, one must reinsert his claims about Peruvian history into the stream of historiographic dialogue into which they originally fed. Although I have situated Guaman Poma's discussions in the context of Spanish political philosophy, I am concerned less with his contributions to the polemic of his time—for these are in themselves predictable—than with setting the stage for a subsequent discussion about the teleological formulation of his work. Guaman Poma fictionalizes Peruvian conquest history in a verbal structure more hypothetical than historiographic; through his literary enterprise, he attempts to make sense of a past long gone and a present that seems to deny the very existence of that lost era.

Guaman Poma's Exploitation of Written Histories

“A writer's desire to write can only come from previous experience with literature,” says Northrop Frye, and the novice will “start by imitating whatever he's read, which usually means what the people around him are writing” (1964:40). It should be added that, in spite of a lack of experience on the part of the would-be author—or perhaps because of it—he or she

will also look around to size up the potential audience or designated readers. If imitating what's being written around them provides authors with literary conventions, assessing their potential audience helps them choose among those possible models. Guaman Poma looked for the literary codes through which he could best communicate with his intended reader, King Philip III, and the most serious of the works available to him, notably historiography, and the literature of religious devotion, provided the models.

The contradictory models Guaman Poma used aid in producing the contradictory effects. The historical datum generates his concern for the precision of facts, whereas the biblical injunction, emphasizing not the particular or specific event but rather the "typical, recurring, or what Aristotle calls universal event," inspires the ahistorical quality of the exemplary figure (ibid.:64). In the first instance, Guaman Poma's models are, for example, Agustín de Zárate's *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú* [1555], which gives him the precise number of "gente de a caballo y de enfantería y arcabuseros" to put into his account of Gonzalo Pizarro's uprising; in the second, such models include Fray Luis de Granada's *Memorial de la vida cristiana* [1566], which offers biblical heroes and prophets whose timeless and exemplary tales represent not the history but the quintessence of moral human experience.

At the outset, Guaman Poma's claim that his work is historical meets with skepticism. Certain events in his history of the conquest of Peru, for example, are invented: his father's reception of Pizarro and Almagro and their band at Tumbes and the willing welcome of the authority of Charles V over the land; the Andeans' failure to resist the Spaniards in attempted battles; and the termination of the civil wars among the Spaniards with the defeat and capture of Hernández Girón by the Andean lords. The Peruvian *coronista* embroiders these episodes into a narration taken in part from the Spanish chronicles of the Peruvian conquest, thereby creating a kind of patchwork effect. By dividing these accounts into the categories of fact and fancy, one might conclude, with Porras Barrenechea (1948) and others, that Guaman Poma is a historian who lies.¹

Looking at the connection between historical truth and fiction as it was understood in Guaman Poma's time, however, suggests another way to examine the implications of the "Conquista" chapter. Historiography then was associated with the poetic and rhetorical arts and its "fictive" nature was commonly recognized (White 1976:23-24). "'Truth' was equated not with 'fact' but with a combination of fact and the conceptual matrix within which it was appropriately located in the discourse;" many kinds of truth played a role in history, and these truths were presented to

the reader through fictional techniques of representation (ibid.:24). To open the discussion of Guaman Poma's discourse, one might well ask: What "facts" are presented and what are the assumptions or conceptual matrix on which their exposition is based?

In the *Nueva corónica*, the facts concern the social, political, and economic administration of an enormous pre-Columbian empire.² The assumption on which their exposition is based is that the organization of that society was superior to that brought by the conquering invaders from Spain ([1615] 1980:890). In "Conquista," the facts are that the Andean state was invaded and conquered by the Spaniards around 1532; the conceptual matrix is constituted by the conviction that the Spaniards had no right to do so. In the *Buen gobierno*, Guaman Poma presents facts about the forced labor imposed on the native population, especially in the mines, and the loss of lives and confiscation of property produced by the witch-hunts at the turn of the seventeenth century. Behind these accounts is the assumption that the Spaniards did all this without justification in violation of every precept of justice and of their own laws.

For Guaman Poma, first angry and ultimately defeated by all that he sees around him, the world of ideas comes to occupy at least as much importance as the world of facts. His "new chronicle" of Peruvian history and his story of the conquest are less a litany of historical detail than the dramatization of an intricate hypothesis. What appears to be the narration of historical events is merely the raw material out of which he constructs his argument in defense of the rights of the Andean people. When he pretends to inform, he is engaging in debate; when he purports to explain, he is attempting to persuade. His integration of historical and fictional elements can best be elucidated in light of the chronicle literature that he reads and contradicts as well as of the Scholastic political philosophy of conquest that he exploits.

Well versed as he is on the published *Crónicas de Indias*, Guaman Poma uses the philosophical treatises on the just war to shape his "history." Although he copies from the works of Zárate and Fernández as chroniclers, his inspiration comes from Vitoria and Soto as political theorists and Las Casas as polemicist. The epigraph of Guaman Poma's conquest "history" might well be "y no ubo conquista," for he insistently declares that there had been no military conquest of Peru: "Y así fue conquistado y no se defendió" ("And thus they were conquered and did not defend themselves") (ibid.:388; see also pp. 164, 377, 564, 573, 971, 972). Isolating his story of the Peruvian conquest from both the *Nueva corónica* and the *Buen gobierno*, he makes a distinction that bears directly on the role of "Conquista" in the work's overall teleological design.

In his history of the Spanish conquest, Guaman Poma blends published historiographic sources of European origin with accounts from oral tradition that were no doubt recalled by his informants who had “dined with the Inca” (ibid.:1088–1089). His description of the first Spanish conquistadores, and the sense of wonderment that he conveys about their appearance and behavior, could only come from his own heritage of oral traditions. He tells how the Spaniards “talked to” their books and papers, how their garb covered them like shrouds, and how they seemed to be of identical social rank because of their undifferentiated attire.³ At the same time, and in spite of accusing Agustín de Zárate and Diego Fernández el Palentino of lacking verified information “about events for which there remained living eyewitnesses” (p. 1088), Guaman Poma copies and paraphrases the preceding citation about them from the *Symbolo catholico indiano* of the Franciscan author Luis Jerónimo de Oré (cf. Oré 1598:f37v, and Guaman Poma [1615] 1980:1088).

Most notable among such borrowings are Guaman Poma’s accounts of the events that took place from the arrival of President de la Gasca to Peru to his victory over the rebellion of Gonzalo Pizarro.⁴ In comparison to his narration of preceding events, Guaman Poma gives prominence (four pictures and four pages of prose) to the uprisings of both Gonzalo and Hernández Girón. Following Zárate’s text on the de la Gasca/Pizarro confrontation, Guaman Poma uses Fernández’s work to orient his account of the Hernández uprising.⁵ Although he follows both of these sources on particulars, he abandons them at crucial points in the narration in order to showcase the alleged heroic role his father and other Andean *curacas* (ethnic lords) played.

Specifically, Guaman Poma echoes Zárate’s *Historia del descubrimiento y conquista del Perú* ([1555] 1947) with regard to the encounters between Gonzalo and de la Gasca, found in the sixth and seventh books of Zárate’s chronicle.⁶ When he departs from Zárate’s text, as in the account of Pizarro’s effort to burn the settlement of Huánuco, he does so for the purpose of celebrating the Andeans’ valor. While paraphrasing Zárate, he nevertheless inserts the name of his father as the hero of the defense of Huánuco. In addition, he highlights the bravery of the Andean warriors in battle by increasing the number of Spaniards who attacked the city (thirty in Zárate; three hundred in Guaman Poma) and subsequently reducing the number of Spanish survivors from forty to four (cf. Zárate [1555] 1947, book 6, chap. 12:555–556, and Guaman Poma [1615] 1980:423).

After the narration of this event, Guaman Poma returns to the same chapter 12 of the Zárate text to narrate Diego Centeno’s successful takeover of Cuzco⁷ and Gonzalo’s definitive defeat and execution.⁸ Guaman

Poma's additions to the Spaniard's narration again reflect indigenous Andean concerns and his desire to promote the importance of the Spanish captain Luis de Avalos de Ayala, to whom he attributes the donation of his own Spanish surname. For example, Guaman Poma characterizes the bloody battle at Huarina Pampa as "la gran batalla que fue mayor en este rreyno entre cristianos, *que no con los yndios*" ("the greatest battle in this kingdom, which was fought among Christians, *not with the Indians*") ([1615] 1980:425; emphasis mine). On describing de la Gasca's battle preparations in the Valley of Jauja, he comments that the president "yua haziendo más gente y maltratando a los yndios" ("went about gathering more troops and ill-treating the Indians") (ibid.:427).⁹ As he narrates de la Gasca's organization of the royal forces, he again paraphrases Zárate, except that he adds the name of Avalos de Ayala to Zárate's list of officers.¹⁰

Guaman Poma concludes his narration of the conquistadores' civil wars, which dominated Peru from 1538 to 1550, with an account of the rebellion and defeat of Francisco Hernández Girón. He takes as his source the *Segunda parte* of Diego Fernández's *Historia del Perú* ([1571] 1963). Unlike the care with which he copied and paraphrased Zárate's book, Guaman Poma follows El Palentino's account only in broadest outline. His most important departure from Fernández's text concerns the role that he attributes to the Andean *caciques* in opposing and vanquishing the rebel; this issue is crucial to his polemical argument.

According to Porras Barrenechea (1948:16–17), El Palentino and other documentary sources indicate that the native troops attacked not only the rebel forces of Hernández Girón but also the army of the crown. Only Guaman Poma, says Porras, turns these acts of indigenous reprisal against all foreigners into an act of loyalty and service to the Spanish king. In effect, Guaman Poma abandons El Palentino's text as the latter relates how the followers of Hernández Girón were captured and punished in Cuzco ([1571] 1963), *Segunda parte*, book 2, chap. 56: v. 165:56–57) and how Hernández Girón himself was captured by Miguel de la Serna and Juan Tello and taken to Lima for execution (ibid.: chap. 58: v. 165:59–62). Instead, from the battle of the king's forces against Hernández Girón onward, Guaman Poma claims that his father, "don Martín de Ayala," and Don León Apo Guasca and Don Juan Guaman Uachaca, *caciques* of Changa, were among "the aforementioned illustrious Indian captains" ("los dichos prencipales yndios capitanes") who participated in the struggle against the rebel ([1615] 1980:433). According to Guaman Poma, they were responsible for Hernández's defeat and flight, despite being gravely outnumbered by the Spaniards and their native allies (ibid.:435). The event is introduced into the narration by a drawing that shows "*Capac*

Apo don Martín Guaman Malqui” and other ethnic lords pursuing the fleeing Spaniards (plate 1). Seeing only the rumps of the galloping horses as they disappear (ibid.:434; see also p. 426), one appreciates Guaman Poma’s apparent visual satire.

In these accounts, the Andean author ignores the battle at Pucara in which the rebel was definitively undone, according to El Palentino (Porras Barrenechea 1948:17). Instead, he proclaims the truthfulness of his own account of the Don Martín de Ayala/*Apo* Alanya victory over Hernández Girón and visually confirms the latter’s capture by Andean lords (ibid.:436; plate 2).

Throughout the “Conquista” chapter, Guaman Poma weaves together the data of the printed histories with accounts either alive in the oral traditions or devised by his own invention. Whatever the variety of his sources, whatever the veracity of events narrated, the focus of the entire chapter is the loyalty and valor of the Andean lords in serving the Spanish king. Overall, the written histories play an important role. They provide the sequence of events and pertinent details, such as the names of Spanish officers, as the background against which Guaman Poma narrates a story of the postconquest civil wars in which the only heroes are Andean.

Respect for History

In spite of his use of written and oral accounts blended with episodes of his own invention, Guaman Poma uses his sources with discrimination. His respect for the factual truth of history can be demonstrated through his treatment of miraculous events, such as the visions of the Virgin Mary and St. James (patron saint of Spain), which were reported during the conquest of Peru. Although he attributes to these events a political meaning, his reporting of them concurs with standard historiographic practice.

As a historian, Guaman Poma would not be permitted to invent characters or events, the “*mentiras*” and “*imitación*” of poetry, as the theoretician of historiography Luis Cabrera de Córdoba called them (1611: f 11 r). However, he could “invent” the formal relationships that obtained among those elements (White 1973b:262). The historian’s job would be to describe and verify events; his would be the burden of accountability to the facts (Krieger 1974:56). In the case of miraculous visions and visits of the apostles to the Indies, Guaman Poma may be dealing with events that had been consecrated as historical by the force of oral tradition. By his framing of these accounts, it is clear that he deals with them in the manner of the serious historian.

In pictures and in writing, Guaman Poma narrates three miracles: the

CONQUISTA BATAÏA QHIZO E

servicio de su mag^d el ex^{to} capalapo don martin guayala p^o el año
 1511 h^o y 12 de mayo y apoguasco apogua ma uachaca han hui yan ca lo ien sol
 1511 y fran^{co} her nand^{es} trescientas sol^{as} de los fue uenca do y se huy o -



en una cocha

gon

Plate 1. "A battle waged in His Majesty's service by Don Martín Guaman Malqui de Ayala" ([1615] 1980:434)

CONQUISTA POALAIACHOLLAN

quihanan uanca quacraguamālunguāca uichaxauca
 pren dio a frañ hernan des consus
 seys sol d'ados capitanes q
 ballo en arma y muy pobre



en xauca

a po

Plate 2. "Apo Alanya and Chuqui Llanqui capture Francisco Hernández Girón" ([1615] 1980:436)

failure of Manco Inca to ignite an Inca palace already converted into a Christian house of worship, and visions of the Virgin Mary and St. James, which caused Inca warriors to prostrate themselves in wonderment and submit to the Spanish troops ([1615] 1980:402-407; plate 3). Guaman Poma carefully inserts the phrase "They say that . . ." ("dizen que . . .") at critical moments in these accounts; that is, he brackets the most fantastic aspects of these events, denying personal responsibility for their truthfulness and thus protecting his own credibility as a historian.

In this regard, Guaman Poma adheres to sixteenth-century historiographic precepts. The highest authorities of the period, namely, the current interpreters of Aristotle, approved the use of those elements that were in accordance with popular belief; angels and saints were the supernatural agencies that had come to replace the old heathen deities (Riley 1962:191). The only stipulation was that such events be handled through the narration of a third party; thus, the author or narrator avoided making a personal judgment on the matter (ibid.:192-193). Guaman Poma's consistent use of the qualifier "dizen que" safeguards his own impartiality not only on the question of legendary miracles but also of his descriptions of traditional Andean rituals and belief systems.¹¹ The care with which he treats the narration of miracles and the exposition of Andean beliefs suggests that he is not indifferent to the search for factual truth in history, but rather possesses a deep respect for it. At the same time, he protects himself from accusations of adherence to indigenous beliefs.

On the other hand, in presenting those episodes of conquest history that explicitly contradict his written sources (the heroic role of the Andean lords, just examined), Guaman Poma neither qualifies his own or the other versions, nor identifies the accounts that he contradicts. He uses no historiographic device that would indicate that his purpose is to set the historical record straight. Yet his respect for history as a literary genre on one hand, and his indifference to its precepts on the other, leave many issues unresolved.

The Dominican Philosophy of Conquest

To support his argument that the Andeans should be exempt from paying tribute to the Spaniards, Guaman Poma recapitulates the principal points of his version of Andean history. He declares that the ancient Andeans were "white," that is, descendants of the sons of Adam, and that they followed in pre-Christian times the "ley de cristiano" ("Christian law"), although the Inca later forced all Andeans to become idolaters ([1615] 1980:80, 87, 119). In the sixteenth century, they submitted to the

CONQUISTA MILAGRODE S. M^{TA} A



Plate 3. "Miracle of St. Mary"
([1615] 1980:404)

authority of the Spanish king and the Roman Catholic pope, becoming baptized Christians and “servants” of God and the Spanish king. When he concludes his argument by stating that the Andeans are not slaves but free under God (“no son esclavos, sino libres por Dios” [ibid.:901]), he is, in effect, rejecting the Aristotelian theory of natural slavery, which was advocated by many of those who considered the wars of conquest to be just (see Hanke [1959] 1975).

Guaman Poma’s praise for some members of the Dominican order, however, suggests his own particular allegiance:

Pero ellos algunos son grandes cristianos y grandes letrados y predicadores y lo fueron desde sus antepasados. Que por ellos muchos ereges se conuertieron a la fe en el mundo. (Ibid.:660)

(But some of them are great Christians and great learned men and preachers, and they were so since their predecessors. That because of them many heretics in the world converted to the [Christian] faith.)

He is probably referring to one or more of the following: the theologian and jurist Francisco de Vitoria; his disciple Domingo de Soto; the missionary Bartolomé de las Casas; and Las Casas’s colleague in Peru—the author of the first Quechua grammar and dictionary—Domingo de Santo Tomás.

The Dominicans’ arguments for Spanish restitution of Andean property greatly influenced Guaman Poma’s articulation of his own views, and it is interesting to speculate on what his ties to the order might have been. According to his own account (ibid.:660), the Dominicans were active in the diocese of Huamanga (“en las dichas dotrinas de Xauxa, de los Yauyos, de Guamanga, Parinacocha”) during his lifetime. In fact, his devotion to Santa María de la Peña de Francia is an indirect indication of the Dominican presence in Huamanga and Castrovirreina.¹²

On practical issues, Guaman Poma shares the mood and method of the Dominicans. For example, one of the *memoriales* authored by Domingo de Santo Tomás and Las Casas in 1560 and sent to Philip II in defense of the rights of the *caciques* of Peru is echoed in Guaman Poma’s own assertions. He takes the Dominicans’ central arguments for his own. First, *encomienda* should be abolished because there is no legal justification for it.¹³ On this point, Guaman Poma will make his own creative defense. Second, the *encomenderos* and all other non-Andeans should be prohibited from entering the natives’ settlements. Third, the king should reinstate and honor the traditional privileges of the ethnic lords of Peru.¹⁴

The important difference between Guaman Poma's arguments and those of the Dominicans is that the latter seek justice in a general way, whereas Guaman Poma struggles for the redress of personal and collective grievances. Whereas the European defenders of the Andeans warn the king about the decline of his fortunes (and fortune) in Peru if the natives are not protected (Las Casas [1560] 1958: v. 5:466), Guaman Poma puts it more bluntly: the Andean race will disappear—not merely decline in numbers—and the crown will be left destitute:

Desde aquí de ueynte años no abrá yndio en este rreyno de que se cirua su corona rreal y defensa de nuestra santa fe católica. Porque cin los yndios, vuestra Magestad no uale cosa porque se acuerde Castilla es Castilla por los yndios. ([1615] 1980: 982)

(From here until twenty years from now, there will be no Indian in this kingdom by which your royal crown and the defense of our holy Catholic faith might be served. Because without the Indians, your Majesty is not worth anything. Because one must remember that Castile is Castile because of the Indians.)

The only Dominican author to whom Guaman Poma expressly refers is Domingo de Santo Tomás. However, the Peruvian chronicler's acquaintance with the works of Las Casas can be deduced from textual comparisons.¹⁵ To find Las Casas in Guaman Poma's book indicates that the Dominican's polemical works did reverberate among the native population of Peru in the decades following Las Casas's death. One of his formal treatises in the field of political polemics, the *Tratado de las doce dudas* ([1564] 1958), provided an important source of rhetorical argumentation for Guaman Poma. The *Tratado* circulated among the Dominicans in the Peruvian viceroyalty (Lohmann Villena 1966:67), and it is likely that the Andean author became acquainted with the work through the members of the order in Huamanga.

Never following blindly these other texts, Guaman Poma manipulates them according to his own purposes. Lacking the European's reflexive respect for the written word, he treats other writings—from those of Acosta to Zárate and including those of Las Casas—with a cool detachment. Just as he follows historians such as Fernández and Zárate to the letter, then contradicts them flatly, so he repeats Las Casas's argument about the injustice of the conquest, then rejects the latter's claim to evangelization as a just title for colonial domination. Guaman Poma decries the direct ecclesiastical rule over the natives that Las Casas so warmly advocates.

In addition, Guaman Poma does not favor the return to the dynastic

rule of strictly Inca hegemony that Las Casas had in mind (see Adorno 1978a, 1978b). Las Casas wrote the *Doce dudas* several years before the last Inca princes, Titu Cusi Yupanqui and Tupac Amaru, had died; with them vanished the last hope for the neo-Inca state that they had attempted to establish and maintain at Vilcabamba. By the time that Guaman Poma was finishing his project, the stakes of the game had changed: Titu Cusi and Tupac Amaru had been gone for approximately forty years, and the situation of the Andean natives had deteriorated beyond all hope. As a result, Guaman Poma does not engage in a debate as to *which* Andean ethnic or political group ought to rule, but rather whether the entire Andean citizenry has been denied rights of the most fundamental kind. By 1615, the Peruvian chronicler is more pro- and pan-Andean than anti-Inca in outlook; in this spirit, he nominates his own son, representing the Yarovilca dynasty, as the new ruler of "las Yndias del Pirú" ([1615] 1980: 963). Thus, he gives a new and creative twist to the arguments that Las Casas had put forward on behalf of the Inca succession in his 1564 treatise.

In a chapter that mimics the rhetorical style of ecclesiastical prose ("Conzederá, ermanos míos" ["Consider, my brothers"]), one of Guaman Poma's meditations reiterates Las Casas's propositions; this text can be taken apart, statement by statement, to show that the *Doce dudas* is its source:

Que aués de conzederar que todo el mundo es de Dios y ançi Castilla es de los españoles y las Yndias es de los yndios y Guenea es de los negros. Que cada déstos son lexítimos propetarios, no tan solamente por la ley, como lo escriuió San Pablo, que de dies años estaua de pocición y se llamaua romano. (Ibid:929)

(That you must consider that all the world is God's, and thus Castile belongs to the Spaniards and the Indies belongs to the Indians, and Guinea, to the blacks. That each one of these is a legitimate proprietor, not only according to the law, as St. Paul wrote, who for ten years resided [in Rome] and called himself a Roman.)

This passage refers to the first principle (*Principio I*) of Las Casas's treatise: all infidels have sovereign jurisdiction over their own territories and possessions; this right to jurisdiction is mandated not only by human legislation (Guaman Poma's "no tan solamente por la ley"), but also by natural and divine law (Las Casas [1564] 1958:486). Guaman Poma's reference to St. Paul has its origin in the same *Principio I*. In that passage, Las Casas cites Augustine's reference to Paul's epistle to the Romans (chapter 13, verse 1), in which the apostle insists that the Christian community obey the monarch under whose jurisdiction it lives, even though that ruler be a

pagan. Thus, says Guaman Poma, St. Paul “called himself a Roman.” In the same manner, Guaman Poma implies, the Spaniards should obey the Andean authorities while in the sovereign kingdom of Peru.

In the passage that follows, Guaman Poma points out that natives of Castile, though they be Jews or Moors, are subject to the laws of the land. Analogously, and “in the language of the Indians,” those Spaniards living in Peru are considered foreigners, *mitmaq*; that is, they are persons sent out from their own homeland to attend to interests abroad. As such, they must obey Andean, not Spanish, law ([1615] 1980:929). In this instance, Guaman Poma is reiterating the second principle (*Principio II*) of Las Casas’s treatise. His statement refers to the proposition in which Las Casas discusses the four classes of infidels and their respective rights and jurisdictions. The first class consists of those, such as the Jews and Moors, who, by living in Castile, are subject to the rule of the Christian kings by right and in fact (“*de jure y de facto*”) and are thus obligated to obey the just laws of the Spanish realm (Las Casas [1564] 1958:487–488). Referring to this first category of infidels, Guaman Poma coordinates the Scholastic notion with the Andean concept of *mitmaq*; the foreign settler must obey the laws of his new land, not those of his country of origin.

Guaman Poma continues and sums up his argument with the following statement:

Cada uno en su rreyno son propetarios lexitimos, poseedores, no por el rrey cino por Dios y por justicia de Dios: Hizo el mundo y la tierra y plantó en ellas cada cimiente, el español en Castilla, el yndio en las Yndias, el negro en Guynea. . . . Y ancí, aunque [el rey español] le haga merced al padre, al español en las tierras que se conponga con el rrey, no es propetario. Y acá a de tener obediencia al señor prencipales y justicias, propetarios lexitimos de las tierras, que sea señor o señora. ([1615] 1980:929)

(Each one in his own kingdom is a legitimate proprietor, owner, not because of the king but by God and through God’s justice: He made the world and the earth and established in them every foundation, the Spaniard in Castile, the Indian in the Indies, the black in Guinea. . . . And thus, although [the Spanish king] grants a favor to the priest, or to the Spaniard in the lands that are settled under the king’s authority, they are not landowners. And thus there must be obedience to the chief lords and magistrates, the legitimate proprietors of the lands, whether they be male or female.)

Thus, Guaman Poma classifies the Andeans as belonging to the fourth category of infidels, that is, those who have never been, and are not at present, subject to a Christian ruler, either by right or in fact. The reasons

he gives are those Las Casas articulated: namely, that the Andeans had never usurped Christian lands nor done Christians any harm nor intended to do so; they had never been subjugated by any Christian prince or any member of the church (Las Casas [1564] 1958:489). By emphasizing the rights of the legitimate landowners and declaring that such rights are mandated not by the king, but by God, Guaman Poma appeals to the notion of natural law, the Scholastic concept of the right of all peoples to sovereignty over their own lands, followed since Aquinas (Höffner [1947] 1957:331–342).¹⁶ Furthermore, his reference to Genesis I (“Dios hizo el mundo y la tierra y plantó en ellas cada cimiento”) reiterates Las Casas’s own citation of the first chapter of Genesis, which he offers in *Principio I* as proof of all peoples’ rights to sovereignty in their own lands under the precepts of natural law (Las Casas [1564] 1958:468).

The juridical works Guaman Poma skillfully exploits serve his own political objectives. Although he has limited success in imitating the language of the European legal treatise, he nevertheless elaborates his “history” of the Spanish conquest of Peru so as to uphold and dramatize the principles that the juridical treatises put forth. Overall, it is as if he rewrote Andean history backwards, starting not with the oral accounts of legendary times, but with the *Tratado de las doce dudas* as the platform from which to argue retrospectively for native autonomy in the Andes.

The Dramatization of a Hypothesis

Guaman Poma’s principal strategy is to show that the Peruvians provided no cause whereby the Europeans could have waged a just war against them. At the very beginning of his chronological narration of Andean history, Guaman Poma denies the validity of the title concerning the right of the Spanish to spread the gospel. He invalidates it by attributing the presence of the historical Cross of Carabuco to the visit of St. Bartholomew in apostolic times (ibid.:92–94).¹⁷ He makes the point that this visit explicitly established Christianity in Peru prior to the arrival of the Spaniards:

Y acá los yndios somos cristianos por la rredimción de Jesucristo y de su madre bendita Santa María, patrona de este rreyno y por los apóstoles de Jesucristo, San Bartolomé, Santiago Mayor y por la santa crus de Jesucristo que llegaron a este rreyno más primero que los españoles. De ello somos cristianos y creemos un solo Dios de la Santícima Trinidad. (Ibid.:1090)

(And thus we Indians are Christians, on account of the redemption of Jesus Christ and of his blessed mother, St. Mary, patroness of this kingdom and by the apostles

CONQVITA EL PRIMERO EMBAXADOR DE VASCARINGA ALEMBAXADOR DELEPERAD



Plate 4. "Don Martín de Ayala, the first ambassador of Huascar Inca, to Francisco Pizarro, ambassador of the emperor Charles V" (1615] 1980:377)

of Jesus Christ, St. Bartholomew, St. James the Greater, and by the holy cross of Jesus Christ, all of which arrived in this kingdom before the Spaniards. Because of them we are Christian and we believe in only one God of the Holy Trinity.)

The greatest and most direct polemical attack that Guaman Poma makes in his conquest history, however, is his contradiction of the notion of a military conquest altogether; this is the “y-no-ubo-conquista” (“and-there-was-no-conquest”) argument to which I have already referred. Guaman Poma bases this claim on two assertions: first, he insists that the keys to the kingdom were peaceably handed over to Francisco Pizarro as emissary of Charles V at Tumbes (plate 4); second, he claims that the miraculous intervention of the Virgin Mary and St. James prevented the Incas from ever resisting the Spaniards by force (see plate 3). On both counts, he attempts to undermine any notion that there had been a just war of conquest in Peru.

Guaman Poma disavows the occurrence of any armed resistance that might have been considered a justification to wage war against the Peruvians. He makes Tumbes not the prelude to later violent encounters, but rather the stage on which the terms of welcome and peace were firmly established:

Y los españoles, don Francisco Pizarro y don Diego Almagro, y don Martin de Ayala¹⁸ se hincaron de rodillas y se abrasaron y se dieron paz, amistad con el enperador. Y le honró y comió en su mesa y hablaron y conuersaron y le dio presentes a los cristianos. Acimismo le dio al señor don Mar[tín] de Ayala que fue primer enbaxador que de Atagualpa en el puerto de Tunbes, adonde saltó primero. ([1615] 1980:378)

(And the Spaniards, Don Francisco Pizarro and Don Diego Almagro, and Don Martín de Ayala knelt down and embraced each other and offered signs of peace and friendship in the name of their emperors. And the Andean lords honored the Spaniards and ate at the same table and spoke and conversed and gave presents to the Christians. In like manner, the Spaniards reciprocated to Don Martín de Ayala, who was the first ambassador—before those of Atahualpa—at the port of Tumbes, where the Spaniards first landed.)

Guaman Poma insists still another time on the immediate and definitive establishment of Andean/Spanish peace, on which occasion his combative tone becomes apparent. In this version, he declares that not only his father, but in fact the principal lords of each of the four subdivisions of the Inca empire had appeared at Tumbes to welcome and embrace the Spanish emperor's representatives. He names all of these “primeros ynfantes y señores, príncipes y principales grandes” and concludes, “De manera los quatro partes destos rreynos se fueron a darse de pas y a bezar

los pies y manos del rrey nuestro señor enperador don Carlos de la gloriosa memoria" ("So that the lords of the divisions of this empire went to offer themselves in peace and kiss the feet and hands of the king, our lord, the emperor Don Carlos of glorious remembrance") (ibid.:564; see also p. 971).¹⁹ Whether his source is oral tradition or, more likely, a hypothetical event of his own creation, he gives it a political interpretation: "Y acá no tenemos encomendero ni conquistador, sino que somos de la corona rreal de su Magestad, seruicio de Dios y de su corona" ("And thus we have neither *encomendero* nor conqueror, but rather we belong to the royal crown of his Majesty, in service to God and crown") (ibid.:564).

With this assertion, Guaman Poma replies to two polemical arguments. The first is directed to the chronicles of the Peruvian conquest, which portrayed the Spaniards' military action as a response to the Incas' violent resistance. In most of these works, the war of conquest was justified and the imposition of *encomienda* sanctioned. Long after the conquest, there is a second matter, which is more crucial to Amerindian authors like Guaman Poma. He aims not only to revise the historical record, but also to deny the Europeans' racist charges of Andean cultural inferiority.

Implicit in the colonialist outlook is the assumption that the ignorance of the Andeans would have prevented their enlightened and free acceptance of Spanish rule. This notion was commonly accepted in learned Spanish circles. Vitoria, for example, maintained that the aborigines' voluntary submission to Spanish authority would have been an act of fear and confusion; it could not, therefore, constitute a legitimate title of conquest.²⁰ In contrast, Guaman Poma's assertion about the Incas' free acceptance of Spanish rule lends historical dignity to his people and defends the civilized image of the contemporary Andean that he strives to create. His insistence on this act of diplomatic submission is, in fact, a return to the argument regarding the rational capacity of the indigenous people. Whereas political theorists had challenged the value of such peaceful surrenders, Guaman Poma responds by painting a picture of Andean submission that is a model of consummate statesmanship on the part of the Inca's ambassadors.

Of critical importance to the dramatization of principles concerning the unjust conquest is the representation of miracles and visions (see plate 3). The Peruvian author contends that the effect of these miraculous visions was to curtail the potential Andean resistance to the Spanish invasion. He gives each of these events—the failure of the consecrated temple to burn, the appearances of the Virgin Mary and St. James—the prominence of pictorial representations (ibid.:402, 404, 406), and he refers to them again later in his book (ibid.:655, 1090). Through them, he responds to the commonly held opinion that the conquest of the New World kingdoms

was not worthy of miracles, that the natural superiority of the Spaniard over the aborigine made supernatural intervention on behalf of the conquistadores or missionaries unnecessary.

Vitoria's assessment of the circumstances is typical of the European attitude. In the 1530s he writes that he is not persuaded that the faith is spreading among the indigenous populations, because he has heard of neither miracles nor extraordinary signs, nor religious examples of conduct, which would serve the purposes of evangelization: "Pues milagros y señales no veo ninguno, ni tan religiosos ejemplos de vida; y sí, en cambio, al contrario, muchos escándalos y crímenes atroces y muchas impiedades" (cited in Höffner [1947] 1957:355). Likewise, in *De procuranda indorum salute*, José de Acosta suggests that the apostolic mission that renounces all employment of force or military protection is not applicable to the New World.

Taking the example of the tragic fate of Dominican and Jesuit missionaries in Florida, Acosta argues that the American natives cannot be converted peacefully because of their primitive ways; indeed, to trust in their reason and free will is like making friends with wild boars and crocodiles ([1588] 1954, book 2, chap. 8:443). Furthermore, Acosta argues, the apostolic method works only if miracles are produced, and, in America, such occurrences are all too scarce (ibid.:443-446). Although he finds this lack of miracles most distressing, he argues, nevertheless, that the superiority of the priests and the inferiority of those to be converted make the situation salvageable: "Porque aquellos a quienes se anuncia la fe son en todo muy inferiores en razón, en cultura, en autoridad; y los que la anuncian, por la antigüedad y prestigio de la religión, por su muchedumbre, su ingenio, su erudición y demás cualidades, son muy superiores" ("Because those to whom the faith is announced are on the whole very inferior in reason, in culture, in authority; and those who announce it, because of the antiquity and prestige of the religion, because of their great numbers, their genius, their erudition and other qualities, are very superior") (ibid.: 446). According to Acosta, then, conventional methods suffice to effect conversion of these simple peoples.

Guaman Poma contradicts the views Acosta and others represent when he argues, "Cómo hizo Dios milagro para hazelle merced a su Madre bendita a los españoles cristianos, por mejor decir que más quizo hazer merced la Madre de Dios a los yndios porque fuesen cristianos y saluasen las ánimas de los yndios" ("How God and his Blessed Mother performed a miracle to grant favor to the Spanish Christians; more properly speaking, how the Mother of God rather meant to grant favor to the Indians in order that they might become Christian and that the souls of the Indians

might be saved”) ([1615] 1980:405). Not only does he thus dignify Andean experience and deny the notion of Andean resistance to or aggression toward the Spaniards, he also attempts to show that Christianity was already established in Peru. For example, when the Inca troops find it impossible to ignite the former Inca palace (Cuyus Mango), newly consecrated as a Christian temple, Guaman Poma interprets the episode as a divine signal indicating that the Andeans had already converted to Christianity: “En ese tiempo era señal de Dios questaua ya fixa la Santa Yglecia en el rreyno” (“At that time, it was a sign of God that the Holy Church was already established in the kingdom”) (ibid.:403; see also p. 655).

The narration of these events dramatizes Guaman Poma’s claims that there had been no military conquest of Peru, an assertion made explicit on several other occasions (see ibid.:164, 377, 388, 564, 573, 971, 972). In addition, he accuses the Spaniards of having acted illegally; they carried no decree that would allow them ruthlessly to kill the Inca or other ethnic lords:

No truxo zédula para matar al rrey Ynga ni a los excelentísimos señores ni a los capitanes deste rreyno. . . . Y ací aués de conzederar y acauar con esto: Que no ay comendero ni señor de la tierra cino son nosotros propetarios lexítimos de la tierra por derecho de Dios y de la justicia y leys. (Ibid.:972)²¹

(He did not carry a decree by which to slay the Inca king or the illustrious lords or the captains of this kingdom. . . . And thus you must consider and conclude this: That there is no *encomendero* nor lord over the land but rather we are the legitimate proprietors of the land, by the right of God and of justice and the laws.)

This denial of foreigners’ rights in Peru provides the key to Guaman Poma’s interpretation of conquest history. For all of his accusations and dramatizations, however, Guaman Poma’s program is not simply a peevish reply to the European histories of the Peruvian conquest. His task is not merely that of making his own people the heroes of the drama and the Spaniards its villains and traitors. The battle of history had already been lost, and Guaman Poma has a more immediate polemical objective. His argument about the nature of the New World natives, their origins and pre-Columbian civilization, is part of a defensive strategy aimed not at the past but at the present. Understanding this move, one can better appreciate the role that the author assigns to the narration of history in his literary project.

The Present Overwhelms the Past

The chapters of the *Nueva corónica* devoted to pre-Columbian An-

dean society play a specific role within the telic design of Guaman Poma's Andean history. Ironically, these chapters concerned with the past reveal that the author's purpose is not historiographic. His interpretation of the past supports his claims about the present; these, in turn, are articulated in ways to ensure the redress of grievances in the future. The moral and political implications of the past for the present are written into every line of the text, and the consistency of his effort makes it possible to argue that a coherence of intention underlies the entire work.

In both the *Nueva corónica* and the *Buen gobierno*, the mutual cross-referencing of past to future and present to past is a constant of Guaman Poma's rhetoric. The intrusion of his contemporary concerns into the historical narration affects the neutral historiographic illusion that he seeks to create. Attempting to offer a "referential illusion" at the level of discourse, he tries to give the impression that the historical referent is speaking for itself (see Barthes [1967] 1970:149; Benveniste [1966] 1971:206-208). But Guaman Poma frequently intrudes into the apparently narrator-less narration of history to offer moralizing commentary in his own stern and passionate voice. He thus creates a two-layered time, braiding, as Barthes says ([1967] 1970:148), the chronology of the subject matter with that of the language-act that reports it. The reader is transported from the historical to the historiographic mode, that is, from the Incas' past to the narrator's present. The voice of the narrator, Guaman Poma, constantly intervenes, not only in the prologues but also in the chapters' narrations. The result is a continual movement between historical time and narrational time in which the passionate commentary of the narrator threatens to engulf the feigned neutrality of the historical narration.

Guaman Poma's treatment of the issues of barbarity and paganism shows how his concern for the present overwhelms his interest in the past. The temporal compression of the *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* narration reveals the immediacy and urgency of his "historiographic" mission and brings to the foreground his preoccupation for the contemporary implications of historical issues.

"Paganism" and "barbarity" had been considered synonymous terms from medieval times; from Burgos in 1512 onward, the fusion of the two concepts was the pretext by which to elaborate the juridical titles of conquest (see Höffner [1947] 1957:61, 264). Whereas the popular European mind considered barbarity (a group's location outside the normal practices that define a given secular culture) and paganism (being outside Christian religious culture) as one, Guaman Poma clearly distinguishes between the two in his discussions of the ancient Andeans. In effect, his argument places Andean society outside the space of European secular

culture but superior to it, and on the very boundary of its religious culture. For example, in each of the four pre-Incaic ages of Andean history, Guamán Poma performs two operations: he admits the terms “*bárbaro*” and “*infiel*” as separate epithets, and simultaneously attenuates them in the context of an exposition that all but contradicts them; at the same time, he offers the “barbarity” of the ancients as a model worthy of imitation by the contemporary Christian reader.

In his “prologue” at the end of his discussion of the first ancient age of Andeans, the Vari Vira Cocha Runa, he declares that the Christian reader could benefit spiritually by emulating the pious ways of these barbarous infidels:

¡O, que buena gente! aunque bárbaro, ynfíel, porque tenía una sonbrilla y lus de conoseimiento del Criador y Hazedor del cielo y de la tierra y todo lo que ay en ella. Sólo en dezir *Runa Camac, Pacha Rurac* [creador del hombre, hacedor del universo] es la fe y es una de las más graue cosas, aunque no supo de lo demás ley y mandamiento, euangelio de Dios, que en aquel punto entra todo. Ued esto, cristianos letores, de esta gente nueva y prended de ellos para la fe uerdadera y serbicio de Dios, la Sanctícima Trinidad. ([1615] 1980:52)

(Oh, what good people!—although barbarous and pagan—because they had a little shadow and light of the knowledge of the Creator and Maker of heaven and earth and all that is within it, only by saying “*Runa Camac, Pacha Rurac*” [creator of man, maker of the universe], they gave proof of their faith—and it is one of the most ponderous things—although they did not know of the rest of the law and commandments or the gospel of God—for on that point everything rests. See this, Christian readers, about this new people and learn from them to achieve the true faith and service of God, the Holy Trinity.)

He similarly defuses the charges of barbarity and paganism in his accounts of the successive Andean eras. He describes the Vari Runa (constituting the second of his four pre-Incaic periods of Andean civilization) as being technically barbarous but virtually Christian: “Y con ello parese que tenía toda la ley de los mandamientos y la buena obra de misericordia de Dios, aunque bárbaro, no sauiendo nada” (“And, with that, it seems that they had all the law of the commandments and the good works of God’s mercy, even though they were barbarous, knowing nothing”) (ibid.:56). He likewise lauds the humanity of the third and fourth eras, the Purun Runa and the Auca Runa, respectively (ibid.:62, 73–74). Summing up the civilization of the fourth era, he erases from the image of these pagan barbarians any trace of sinfulness and vice:

De cómo en aquel tiempo no se matauan ni se rrobauan ni se echauan maldiciones ni auía adúlteras ni ofenza en seruicio de Dios ni auía luxuria, enbidia, auaricia, gula, soberuia, yra, acidia, pereza. . . . Y abía mandamiento de Dios y la buena obra de Dios y caridad y temor de Dios y limosna se hazían entre ellos. (Ibid.: 73)

(How, during that time, they did not murder nor rob one another nor utter curses, nor was there adultery or offenses against God. Nor was there lust, envy, avarice, gluttony, pride, ire, indolence or sloth. . . . And they had the commandments of God and the good works of God and charity and the fear of the Lord, and they gave alms to one another.)

Guaman Poma's narration therefore serves as a contradiction of the labels he applies to the ancient Andeans insofar as his narrator's voice intervenes to condemn and praise, in the language of the Christian orator: though Gentiles, Guaman Poma argues, the ancients worshipped the true God by the light of their natural reason.²² Christianity itself is anticipated by the reference to the one god in three persons: "Tenían los yndios antiguos conocimiento de que abía un solo Dios, tres personas" ("The ancient Indians had knowledge of the fact that there was only one God, in three persons").²³ Barbarity, in all four accounts, is reduced to the lack of a writing system ("los que son inorantes sin letras," "those who are ignorant of letters," in Las Casas's words).²⁴ In short, as the ancient Andeans are described in such a way as to defend the spiritual purity and innocence of their contemporary successors, the historian's voice is overcome by that of the strident polemicist.

In surveying Guaman Poma's efforts as a historian, we discover that the narratorless historical description is overtaken by the polemicist's historical interpretation, which is always embedded in immediate, contemporary concerns.²⁵ The present flows out and washes over every recollection of the past. For Guaman Poma, to write history is to engage in polemic and to reconstitute the events of history as they should have happened. By claiming to appropriate the conventions of the historiographic treatise, he effectively usurps the right to speak in the privileged forum to which even the sympathetic Las Casas would have denied him entrance.²⁶ Although Guaman Poma proclaims his devotion to historical truth, he undercuts it at every turn. His strategy is complex, and the problem of his work's generic identification requires further exploration. In the discussion of the theory of sixteenth-century historiography that follows, I shall examine one type of history writing—the biography—for which Guaman Poma displays a special affinity. With the biography, the author's move away from political history becomes patently apparent.