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VOLUME III
SOUTH AMERICA
PART 1

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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations *page ix*

Part 1

Introduction	1
FRANK SALOMON AND STUART B. SCHWARTZ	
1 Testimonies: The Making and Reading of Native South American Historical Sources	19
FRANK SALOMON (<i>University of Wisconsin-Madison</i>)	
2 Ethnography in South America: The First Two Hundred Years	96
SABINE MACCORMACK (<i>University of Michigan</i>)	
3 The Earliest South American Lifeways	188
THOMAS F. LYNCH (<i>Brazos Valley Museum-Bryan and Texas A&M University</i>)	
4 The Maritime, Highland, Forest Dynamic and the Origins of Complex Culture	264
ANNA C. ROOSEVELT (<i>American Museum of Natural History</i>)	
5 The Evolution of Andean Diversity: Regional Formations (500 B.C.E.–C.E. 600)	350
IZUMI SHIMADA (<i>Southern Illinois University</i>)	
6 Andean Urbanism and Statecraft (C.E. 550–1450)	518
LUIS LUMBRERAS (<i>Universitat de Barcelona</i>)	
7 Chiefdoms: The Prevalence and Persistence of “Señoríos Naturales” 1400 to European Conquest	577
JUAN AND JUDITH VILLAMARÍN (<i>University of Delaware</i>)	

8	Archaeology of the Caribbean Region LOUIS ALLAIRE (<i>University of Manitoba</i>)	668
9	Prehistory of the Southern Cone MARIO A. RIVERA (<i>Andes Archaeological Consultants</i>)	734
10	The Fourfold Domain: Inka Power and Its Social Foundations MARÍA ROSTWOROWSKI (<i>Instituto de Estudios Peruanos</i>) and CRAIG MORRIS (<i>American Museum of Natural History</i>)	769
11	The Crises and Transformations of Invaded Societies: The Caribbean (1492–1580) NEIL L. WHITEHEAD (<i>University of Wisconsin-Madison</i>)	864
12	The Crises and Transformations of Invaded Societies: Andean Area (1500–1580) KAREN SPALDING (<i>University of Connecticut</i>)	904
13	The Crises and Transformations of Invaded Societies: Coastal Brazil in the Sixteenth Century JOHN M. MONTEIRO (<i>Universidade Estadual de Campinas and Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento</i>)	973
	<i>Index to Part 1</i>	1025

Part 2

14	The Crises and Transformations of Invaded Societies: The La Plata Basin (1535–1650) JUAN CARLOS GARAVAGLIA (<i>École des Hautes Études en Science Sociale, Paris</i>)	1
15	The Colonial Condition in the Quechua-Aymara Heartland (1570–1780) THIERRY SAIGNES (<i>Institut des Hautes Études de l'Amérique Latine/Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique</i>)	59
16	Warfare, Reorganization, and Readaptation at the Margins of Spanish Rule: The Southern Margin (1573–1882) KRISTINE L. JONES (<i>Bowdoin College</i>)	138
17	The Western Margins of Amazonia from the Early Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century ANNE CHRISTINE TAYLOR (<i>Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique</i>)	188

18	Warfare, Reorganization, and Readaptation at the Margins of Spanish Rule – The Chaco and Paraguay (1573–1882)	257
	JAMES SCHOFIELD SAEGER (<i>Lehigh University</i>)	
19	Destruction, Resistance, and Transformation – Southern, Coastal, and Northern Brazil (1580–1890)	287
	ROBIN M. WRIGHT (<i>Universidad de Campinas</i>) with the collaboration of MANUELA CARNEIRO DE CUNHA (<i>University of Chicago</i>)	
20	Native Peoples Confront Colonial Regimes in Northeastern South America (c. 1500–1900)	382
	NEIL L. WHITEHEAD (<i>University of Wisconsin-Madison</i>)	
21	New Peoples and New Kinds of People: Adaptation, Readjustment, and Ethnogenesis in South American Indigenous Societies (Colonial Era)	443
	STUART B. SCHWARTZ (<i>Yale University</i>) and FRANK SALOMON (<i>University of Wisconsin-Madison</i>)	
22	The “Republic of Indians” in Revolt (c. 1680–1790)	502
	LUIS MIGUEL GLAVE (<i>Instituto de Estudios Peruanos</i>)	
23	Andean Highland Peasants and the Trials of Nation Making during the Nineteenth Century	558
	BROOKE LARSON (<i>State University of New York at Stony Brook</i>)	
24	Indigenous Peoples and the Rise of Independent Nation-States in Lowland South America	704
	JONATHAN D. HILL (<i>Southern Illinois University</i>)	
25	Andean People in the Twentieth Century	756
	XAVIER ALBÓ (<i>Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado, La Paz</i>)	
26	Lowland Peoples of the Twentieth Century	872
	DAVID MAYBURY-LEWIS (<i>Harvard University</i>)	
	<i>Index to Part 2</i>	949

1

TESTIMONIES: THE MAKING AND READING OF NATIVE SOUTH AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOURCES

FRANK SALOMON

This introductory chapter surveys writings that contain native South American versions of the past and problematizes the way they contain them. Its main purpose is to afford readers a “feel” for native sources’ diverse viewpoints, their verbal textures, their transformations during editing into non-native genres, and their historiographic promise. Secondly, it raises questions about making a *History* out of materials that mobilize memory in ways more or less distant from Euro-American historiography. In what sense is a chant in praise of mummified ancestors or a Kogi origin story a historical source? What reading shall we give them? Aside from writing histories of South American Indians, a still-underdeveloped but basically conventional part of the academic agenda, has anyone written South American Indian histories? What sorts of textual pasts are indigenous South American writers producing now?

The first five parts sketch the literature of colonial native testimonies. The next three sections concern modern sources in their relation to ethnography (see Map 1.1). The final two sections concern methodological issues about oral tradition, literacy, and the material record. Overall, and especially from page 51 onward, the chapter is concerned with some critical questions that arise in the effort to imbue historiography with ethnographic insight: How different and how separate are mythic and historical “past-discourses”? Why has the West been slow to recognize South American social memory? What difference does the introduction of writing make to indigenous treatments of the past? Where local uses of the past differ fundamentally from literate historiography, how can historians handle them with authenticity?

RECORDING OF EVENTS AND MEMORIES IN NATIVE
MNEMOTECNOLOGIES

South America offers nothing similar to Mesoamerican codices because no native South American culture practiced writing in the common sense of the word before Iberian contact. To be sure, before 1492, most South Americans expressed thoughts about descent, time, and change in innumerable mnemonic practices, which, without resembling writing, were taken as legible remembrances. Some groups encoded the past in bodily actions: dances with costumes representing ancient beings, or chants, or pilgrimages to origin places. Others inscribed the past in sacred artifacts, some meant to eternalize evocative bodily action: lifelike ancestor mummies, trophies such as masks made from human faces (in Peru) or skins of enemies stuffed with ash (in Colombia) to commemorate victories. Other mnemonic objects aggrandized a historic person or kin group in tomb architecture, including (in Peru) palatial structures holding dead sovereigns. These methods of remembrance accompanied an idea of the past as a parallel reality into which one could enter by ritual means, retrieving powerful knowledge and thereby influencing the future.

“Legible” images of the ancients occurred on figurative ceramic, which, in several cultures of the Pacific shore, reached an iconography of encyclopedic complexity and included portraits of human individuals. Complex iconography, especially when presented in striplike series of images (as occurs in northern Moche ceramics) were visible scenarios of human-divine interaction. Some have been convincingly explicated. However suggestions that arrays of colored “beans” painted on Mochica ceramic or of geometrical *tuqapu* (written *tocapu*, etc.) emblems on Inka garments encode language remain speculative.

One system of graphic language that endured into modernity may derive from prehispanic precedent: the “picture writing” of the San Blas (Panamanian) Cuna. Cuna “writing” uses chains of partly semasiographic and partly logographic symbols to help readers memorize long song texts, narratives, and lists of shrines. Its principles may well be of prehispanic derivation, though no prehispanic example is known.

In the Inka heartland, pictures may have served to convey information across language boundaries. An early source close to the Inka royalty tells us newly conquered provinces had to send “pictures of what they possessed and of what kind and usefulness their respective lands were.” Cristóbal de Molina “Cuzqueño” said the Inka “had in a house of the



Map 1.1.

Sun called Poquen Cancha, which is close to Cusco, the life of each one of the Inka [sovereigns], and of the lands he conquered, and what was their origin, painted as figures on certain panels [*tablas*].” Through three colonial centuries, pictorial genealogies using combined Inka and Spanish iconographic conventions remained popular among natives.

Starting in 1940, D. E. Ibarra Grasso documented in the area of Lake Titicaca and as far south as Potosí, many examples of pictorial mnemonic texts drawn on leather or paper. Some examples of Bolivian “visible language” took the form of three-dimensional clay models. All known examples served as aids to learning catechism rather than history. Whether they belong, as Ibarra Grasso thought, to a continuous tradition derived from prehispanic models is far from certain. Early attestations are ambiguous, and the first clear description was published in 1869.

The foregoing mnemotechnologies afford clues to “Indian histories” even before 1492, but only one medium so far discovered gives a clear precolumbian toehold for a “history of Indians”: the Andean *kipu* or knotted cord record. Hundreds of ancient *kipus* exist in collections, mostly looted from prehispanic tombs and therefore lacking archaeological context. The art of making *kipus* to record quantitative data (such as tribute quotas, censuses, or herd records) is fairly well understood. It resembles the use of the abacus but is also adaptable to tree-structures and other complex arrays of data. Its arithmetic rests on a system of base-ten positional notation. The meaningful features of numerical knots included color, knot position, knot type, and left- or rightward motion in making cord and knot. Large *kipus* could hold vast statistical matrices in complex formats, such as, for example, a census of an imperial province, or the inventory of a vast warehousing complex. The largest known example, from northern Chile, has 1,404 data cords.

Could *kipus* represent nonnumerical data such as narrations? One early and well-informed witness mentions a variant of the *kipu* that used “long strings of beads” to record the decrees of the Inka ruler “Ynga Yupangue.” Early colonial natives generally agreed *kipus* encoded narratives, and in early colonial Cusco, *kipu* experts were considered repositories of dynastic knowledge. As early as 1542, the Licentiate Vaca de Castro collected a seemingly historic narrative that has become known as the “chronicle of the *kipu* masters.” But we do not know much about how “*kipu* masters” like Callapiña and Supno, the 1542 sources, encoded nonnumerical data. The leading modern students of *kipu* technique, Robert and Marcia Ascher, see historical *kipus* as technically

possible. If certain *kipu* number/knot combinations were assigned to represent certain opening formulas, each of which introduced an episode of a stereotyped sort, then a *kipu* indicating order of formulaic introductions would serve as a key to correct ordering of events and persons. Royal oral chronicles from Burundi are analogously organized upon a pattern of semirhythmically recurring introductory formulas each of which calls forth a given type of episode (e.g., a rebellion by a court diviner). Such a system would record the structure, not the content, of a narrative, and reading it would depend on personally knowing a priori what structures belong to what narratives and what particulars should fill them. Gary Urton, however, argues that *kipus* were more like writing than this, in the double sense that they functioned as standardized rather than personalized aids to memory, and that they encoded syntactical relations among elements of a narrative rather than merely listing its raw ingredients.

Early colonial chroniclers respected *kipu*-based historical testimony. When Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa researched what was to be the official history of Inka rule endorsed by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo's regime (1572), he knew no better way to legitimate it than to present it as the fruit of interviews with over a hundred *kipu* masters. Until the late sixteenth century, colonial courts also readily received *kipu*-based testimony, especially records regarding economic transfers. When the native lords of Hatun Xauxa in 1561 sued for recovery of the goods and services they had given Pizarraan armies in the early days of the European invasion, the Xauxa lords were able to account to the court's satisfaction for transfers that had taken place a quarter century earlier, down to the last "partridge" (actually the Andean bird is a tinamou) and pair of sandals.

ORAL TESTIMONY EMBEDDED IN IBERIAN CHRONICLES

What little we know about oral representations of the past in pre-European times comes mostly from the viceroyalty of Peru. In Amazonian and Pampean regions, early testimonial data are very scarce, because there was no period of "indirect rule" during which translation, transculturation, and writing could develop within native society. In all cases, the dubious translating process and the intense though often hidden political agenda of postinvasion historiography require cautious reading. Some early chroniclers talked with Inka princes and soldiers even before Spanish victory was secure. Yet because their nascent "history of Indians"

was framed within the theme of Spanish victory, all but a few made it hard to isolate elements of “Indian history” apart from European concerns.

Rightly or wrongly, most chroniclers thought that the Inka state, like European kingdoms, sponsored official intellectual authorities: *amautas*, as they were called in hispano-Quechua, because their work was *hamutani* (“to conjecture and bring out in speech what will be good and turn out well and what will not”). *Amautas* supposedly created short historico-mythic narratives for the edification of Inka youth. At major Inka ceremonies, *harauicos*, sometimes glossed ‘poets’, performed ballads of the deeds of the mummified ancestors.

In the courses of their reigns, Inka rulers authorized chants of their victories. Juan de Betanzos, an early conquistador of Cusco who married an Inka princess and knew Quechua well enough to appreciate what she told him, wrote down in 1551 a seeming paraphrase of the heroic poems (*cantares*; the word was the then-current Spanish term for *chansons de geste*) that Inka rulers and commanders sang. His chapter 19 describes the début of a new *cantar* in honor of Inka victory over the Soras people. It suggests the ceremonial matrix of official Inka historical knowledge.

The sovereign “Ynga Yupangue” ordered captive Sora lords and all their insignia displayed before him. He had red fringes attached to each garment and then trod them underfoot. He dedicated a new refrain to the occasion: “Ynga Yupangue, Child of the Sun, conquered the Soras and put fringes on [them].” This refrain formed a leitmotif to a month-long triumph in whose later stages the Inka nobility re-performed “histories”:

They would enter into the city [of Cusco] singing, each one in order, the things that had happened to them, all of which they went chanting, starting first, with the ones who had been with Ynga Yupangue and with the chant you already heard, about the conquest of the Soras. And when these had finished, the other captains started to chant what had happened to them in Condesuyo Province, and the other captains who had subjected the lowlands did the same, and likewise [the Inka] ordered that the prisoners should go along weeping and reciting their faults and crimes in a loud voice, as they were subjects and vassals of the Sun’s child.¹

The greatest recitals of Inka history were associated with mortuary rituals and the honors done for the preserved bodies of dead rulers. The

¹ Juan de Betanzos’ *Suma y narración de los Incas* [1551], María del Carmen Rubio, ed. (Madrid, 1987), 93–97.

brilliant soldier-chronicler Cieza de León explains how, at royal funerals, *kipu* masters recounted the administrative chronicle of the deceased's reign to "those who were the best in rhetoric and richest in words." These specialists would compose them into popular songs with refrains (*villancicos*) or ballads (*romances*).

And so, knowing what had to be said because of what had occurred in similar ceremonies for dead lords . . . they would sing in elegant order the many battles that were fought in this and that part of the kingdom; and consequently they had at hand appropriate chants or ballads for each undertaking, which, when such were needed, they could sing so that the people would rally on hearing them and understand what happened in other times. . . . Those Indians who by the kings' order knew these ballads were honored and were favored, and they took great care to teach the ballads to their children and to men of their own provinces, the best-informed and most astute ones to be found; and so, by passing knowledge from one mouth to another, they became able today to tell what happened five hundred years ago as if it were ten.²

When an Inka sovereign died, his mummy was considered the permanent owner of the estate built up during his reign. Oral traditions formed part of this estate. Poet-performers representing the sovereigns' respective descent groups sang their ballads or chants to the reigning sovereign whenever the mummies attended ceremonies at the plazas of Cusco.

Many Spanish writers, particularly from the 1560s through the 1590s, compiled versions of Inka oral tradition. In laying the jural bases of Spanish rule, Viceroy Francisco de Toledo (1569–1581) commissioned the compilation and tendentious interpretation of much Inka lore. The jurists Juan de Matienzo and Juan Polo de Ondegardo wrote down what they believed to be both pre-Inka customary law and details of Inka legislation.

The art of eliciting South American folk history and braiding it into chronicles of European type was practiced far into the seventeenth century, not only in Inka lands but also in peripheries where less centralized native societies were less easily compared to European models of statecraft and worship. However, much less is known about the lore of the past among non-Inka peoples. Cieza de León began writing down his observations about northern South American peoples while in Venezuela in 1541; from 1548 on, he traveled southward through Colombian regions where the Inka never ruled. On this route, and then as he continued

² Pedro Cieza de León, *The Incas of Pedro Cieza de León*, Harriet de Onís, trans. (Norman, Oklahoma, 1959), 187–188.

deeper into the former Inka empire, he noted that some people whom his contemporaries considered savage nonetheless possessed a form of history. Among the Quimbaya, a Colombian people dwelling far outside Inka rule, he observed that:

When they went out to their festivals and pleasures in some plaza, they used to get all the Indians together, and two of them with two drums would beat out the rhythm; with another one taking the lead, they start to dance and perform, and all follow; and each carries a jar of wine in the hand; because drinking, dancing and singing are things they do all at once. Their songs consist of reciting in their own style their undertakings of the moment, and retelling the past fortunes of their elders.³

Fray Pedro Simón's huge Colombian-Venezuelan chronicle contains large stretches of what must be in origin native testimony. In such sources, it is usually difficult to isolate native testimony, because European suppositions and rhetoric not only frame but suffuse and transmute virtually all the information originally gathered from natives.

Few soundings of historical consciousness are available for people who lived beyond European frontiers. What we know of Amazonian peoples' sense of the past usually comes from outsiders: missionaries, ex-captives, and travelers. The coastal Brazilian Tupinamba, whose cannibalism inspired Montaigne's great essay, practiced cannibalism for reasons closely related to their sense of historicity. Visitors saw the warlike coastal Brazilians as preoccupied with their past; leaders chanted ancestors' warlike and heroic deeds as well as origin myths, while the group responded in refrain. In 1555, André Thévet heard and recorded performances that included not only myths of origin but an oratorical tirade by a Tupinamba chief in which he recounted his victories and acts of ritual cannibalism. This complex of war and vengeance has been interpreted as the armature of a disinctive mode of historical consciousness (see p. 57, pp. 109–21).

CIVIL GOVERNANCE AND NATIVE TESTIMONY

Fortunately chronicles make up only a small portion of the record fashioned from native speech. The mass of the documentary iceberg consists of material generated in the work of both civil and church bureaucracies: letters from native leaders, lawsuits, claims of nobility, and so forth.

³ Pedro Cieza de León, *La crónica del Perú* [1553] (Buenos Aires, 1962), 88.

Though this material was hardly meant to be read as history, most of the progress historical ethnology has made since the 1946–1959 *Handbook of South American Indians* derives from its analysis. Martin Lienhard's useful studies on the capture of literacy by American peoples place the sources into a dramatically expanded history of New World literature.

This largely unpublished universe of writing freshens vistas of the indigenous past. Indeed, lawyers' and administrators' relative unconcern with scholastic norms of historiography, their lack of edifying purpose, and their cold adherence to the goal of managing native society opened their work to considerations that sometimes approach the ethnographic. Administrative paper and litigations focus on house-to-house scale detail, they seek to learn local customary laws, they mobilize the testimony of thousands of people too low-ranking to interest chroniclers of state and empire, and they deal with the domains of work and family, not just warfare and worship. Law, as understood circa 1600, embraced a wider sweep of social relationships than did history as then understood.

The civil governance of thickly settled regions like the Andes generated, for example, detailed house-to-house inspections (*visitas*) the better to levy tribute. When well executed, these proceedings yielded not only controlled sets of field notes on native society from 1548 onward, but penetrating inquiries on the norms obtaining before Spanish rule. *Visitas* also often contain detailed questionnaires about the local administration of Inka institutions. The data are incomparably more detailed than anything chroniclers recorded. John Murra pioneered the use of such data to clarify the fine structure of Inka rule. Each community spelled out its tribute obligations to the Inka in what are probably local categories. When asked to read out their *kipus* in 1559, the native lords of Urin Chillo, on the Ecuadorian periphery of the Inka domains, explained that

[Urin Chillo] used to serve the Inkas by bringing firewood and straw for them to the city of Quito, and gave them some Indians who took care of some llamas on their own land, and they used to sow some maize fields for them, and they carried what they harvested to the storage deposit in the city of Quito, and some Indians who know how to make *cunbi* [luxury] clothing made some clothing with wool that the [Inka's] managers gave them, and they also used to give [the Inkas] some Indians for warfare when asked, and an Inka manager together with the cacique of the town used to parcel out all the abovementioned [duties] according to the town's ability and that of each Indian.⁴

⁴ *Visita y numeración de los pueblos del valle de los Chillos 1551–1559*, Cristóbal Landázuri, ed. (Quito, 1990), 201.

Another way in which the state sometimes sucked native historical memories into the written current was to require “Geographical Reports” about provincial regions. Questionnaires from the 1570s onward elicited a crown data base about lands where benefices and saleable office could be purveyed. Some curates and administrators responded to the call for reports with almost ethnographic thoroughness, occasionally embedding local accounts of the remote past. Such documents provided historic testimonies from low-status peoples rarely consulted by chroniclers, such as the ethnically stigmatized Cañaris:

In the time of their paganism, each sector (*parcialidad*) had its own lordship (*señorío*) . . . and the lord of this town of Azogue before the Inka came was called Pueçar, which means ‘broom’, and we don’t know the meaning of his being called so. This chieftain Pueçar had a son called Guichannauto, which means “heavy head” because he had a very large head. . . . Before the Inka conquered them they didn’t pay as tribute anything more than what constituted recognition of the chief, namely food and drinks for him and work on his fields in their seasons and on his houses.⁵

The thickest vein of oral-historical tradition about secular matters is the lore embedded in litigation. Especially valuable are the dynastic traditions adduced during lawsuits between claimants to colonial chiefdoms, and the agrarian history adduced in resource fights between communities. When native litigants took the stand, they readily recited power conflicts, successions, and genealogies from two or three generations previous to Spanish conquest. If one adds in the autobiographical papers colonial lords tendered in applications for pensions, the native record appears anything but scarce. Indeed, the tidal wave of native litigation that began to swamp Spanish courts from the 1570s onward has opened windows invisible in the chronicle record.

One example is the coast of Peru, illuminated by the researches of María Rostworowski. Up to about 1970, the area seemed ethnohistorically unresearchable because epidemics demolished native polities before many chronicles were written. Yet the long memory mobilized in lawsuits kept retrieving the prehispanic past even when its “owners” were almost gone. The following is a fragment of a lawsuit about coca fields that were contested among three non-Inka ethnic groups, the Inka state, and, later, Spanish neo-feudal interests. In 1558, the witness Cristóbal Malcachagua

⁵ Gaspar de Gallegos, “Sant Francisco Pueleusí del Azogue” [1582] in *Relaciones Geográficas de Indias*, Marcos Jiménez de la Espada, ed. (Madrid, 1965), 275.

remembered how, as a youth, in Inka times, he had played a small part in native lords' diplomacy:

In the time of Guascar Ynga, Vilcapoma was the cacique [native lord] of the said town of Chacalla, which was before the Christians came to this land. Sometimes he used to go to Guarocheri, of which this witness is a native, to visit the Guarocheri cacique, whose name was Nynaguilca, father of Don Sebastian who is the cacique now. He used to carry cobs of corn and coca and red pepper and other foods for the said cacique Nynaguilca, and he would say: "This is what I've brought from my field called Quybi." In Inka times the lord of Guarocheri used to have fields in Quibi and when this witness was a boy of twelve or thirteen years, he went by order of cacique Nynavilca from Guarocheri town to Quybi to see and visit the fields the cacique had there. And as he walked through them visiting and looking them over, this witness . . . heard some Indians from Chacalla say, as they were coming to the said Nynabilca, that the Indians of Canta also wanted to take over their lands at the time of a native insurrection. Nynabilca said they should sell their lands and fields to the Indians from Canta and if [Canta] inflicted any more nuisances or damages, all the Yauyo Indians would go out against the Canta Indians.⁶

Papers of this genre (although not always of this quality) accumulated in all areas where native societies were transformed into colonial peasantries.

Notarial copybooks from colonial cities, too, almost always contain papers about the mundane business conducted by Indian urbanites or visitors. The most rewarding protocols are wills, in which native women as well as men detailed their lands, clothes, furniture, and finances and outlined their most important familial relationships. Insofar as wills look backward at genealogical relationships and forward via estate planning, they are testimonies of diachronic reasoning. Also, they sometimes mention older regalia whose display embodied traditional legitimacy. When Don Diego Collín, ruler of a community in highland Ecuador, made his will in 1598, he left an important clue to his group's concept of legitimate continuity, namely, that the succession required inheritance of regalia including exotic Amazonian costume:

Item, I declare that I have a blowgun and I order that the said Don Miguel Zumba my nephew is to have and inherit it together with its staffs.

Item, I declare that I have three feather diadems and I order that they be divided among Don Miguel my nephew and the said Don Diego and Don Luis my

⁶ *Conflicts over coca fields in XVIth-century Peru*, María Rostworowski de Diez Canseco, ed. (Ann Arbor, 1989), 94.

sons – with other small feathers of birds which I have, each of them two feathers with its diadem.

Item, I declare that I have a string of shells which natives call *catuc* [‘finger-bone’?] and I order that my son Don Diego Cullin is to have and inherit it.

Item, I declare that I have two drums from the Quijos [an Amazonian region] and I say that they may never be taken from my house forever but are to be left on display.⁷

Natives also took part in the politico-legal battles that raged in the wake of the civil war between Pizarran conquistador elites and the Spanish crown. When Indians sought redress for what was confiscated in war, or when Spanish warlords asked to be reimbursed for their services against rebel *encomenderos*, they often mobilized native memories reaching back to the early moments of contact. One memorable trial in 1573 interviewed eighteen veterans of the Inka armies that vainly defended Tawantinsuyu. Don Diego Chuqui Xulca remembered the first rumors of the “sons of the sea,” and then their desecration of the supreme shrine:

It was told and became well known here in the province of Yauyos that Atahualpa [the Inka prince victorious in a war of succession] was in Caxamarca with armed forces, and that Spaniards and Christians called Capacocho [meaning ‘sons of the sea’, according to other witnesses] were coming against him. This witness went there in the company of his father . . . and as [they] were going along the road . . . they ran into Hernando Pizarro and other Spaniards who were coming with him, and an Inka envoy sent with him by Atahualpa called Inga Mayta. Hernando Pizarro made him return to [the great sanctuary at] Pachacamac . . . and there this witness saw how Hernando Pizarro made them collect all the gold and silver, vases and pitchers and the consecrated women and vessels and objects of service and bowls and many other golden and silver and gilded objects which were in the houses of the Sun and the idol Pachacama, and the belongings of the nuns or mamaconas.⁸

Obviously, this is not exactly first-person testimonial language. How freely did native discourse pass through the filter of legalistic form? Legal papers appear at first glance dryly formulaic. Lawyers, stage-managing witnesses for clients’ ends, used questionnaires to cut and frame oral

⁷ Chantal Caillavet, “Ethno-histoire équatorienne: un testament indien inédit du XVI siècle,” *Caravelle* 41 (1983), 16.

⁸ *Versión Inca de la conquista*, Edmundo Guillén Guillén, ed. (Lima, 1974), 20.

tradition inauthentically. Colonial judges let lawyers mold testimony through leading questions. In the process, they snipped “Indian histories” to fit such “histories of Indians” as clients’ interests required.

With a few exceptions, such as the innovative lawyer-researcher Polo de Ondegardo, legally trained questioners generally limited witnesses to points of preconceived legal interest rather than expanding the reach of law by exploring Andean ideas. Even though witnesses probably drew on diverse genres (dynastic titles, *kipu* readouts, etc.), native stylistics were silenced. First-person diction and native-language tropes got flattened to a characteristic run-on reportorial style. Translators were usually present but almost never explored the semantics of non-Spanish words, and opponents almost never questioned each other’s translations. Even at early dates, legal writing took place within well-established codes of inaccurate but rigid cross-cultural correspondence. And although Quechua discourse must underlie most of these papers, written Quechua is scarce. (The exceptions are typically native-to-native exchanges: transactions prepared by “scribes for natives,” whose work was important but rarely preserved, or political correspondence such as the out-of-court letters of two native lords studied by Itier.) Given these facts, all except the most sensitive civil papers look ethnographically unpromising.

But other factors point in the opposite direction. For one, litigation was in one sense a more natural context for the recitation of native genres than was that most acculturated of all activities, book writing. We know from African studies that disputes were among the few contexts in which the otherwise separate proprietary traditions belonging to different lineages would normally be juxtaposed and contrasted. A trial, even a colonial one, falls in part within the context proper to the native mnemotechnology. Also, besides trial records’ evident advantages for “history of Indians” (they allow one to weigh contrary native opinions and collate them with exterior testimony), trials also have advantages for capturing properties of “Indian history,” such as the ways in which opposing villages argued overlapping but discrepant genealogical histories.

The following is a sworn genealogy given by Martyn Choquesapinti, a 1623 litigant for a Peruvian chiefdom. In order to give it, someone (probably Choquesapinti) drew onto a paper a diagram of interconnected circles representing persons (lawyers called it a family tree). A scribe then wrote Choquesapinti’s explanations onto the paper, superimposing script on diagram:

Apo Chata [interlineated: Yauri] was the paramount cacique of this thousand of Quinti [illegible word] since the time of the Inka and he had three sons who are the following.

the oldest son of Apochata Yauri was Maca Guaman who merited [i.e., succeeded to rule through his achievements] in Inka times;

This man was the son of the said Maca Guaman who was named Yauri Villca, who merited in Inka times;

This [is] the son of the said Yauri Villca who was called Don Miguel Marcos.

Don Miguel Marcos had as his legitimate son Don Miguel Chumbi Ricçi. This said Don Miguel Chumbi Ricçi had a lawsuit about his office of cacique with Don Pedro Anchivilla, Don Miguel Guamanchata's father, and with Don Fernando Llacsavilla.⁹

South Americans did not take long to incorporate institutions and concepts of colonial origin into their testimonies, and thus accredit them as traditional. For example, the concept of the *cacique principal* or paramount colonial chief, although it was at first recognized by natives as an innovative Spanish transformation of *curacazgo* or kinship-modeled political primacy, became by the 1560s a model for native political action. Native lords made use of it retroactively in explaining ancient as well as recent succession. It only took one generation to learn that exogenous "histories of Indians" were themselves valuable in building effective "Indian histories."

THE CHURCH AND NATIVE TESTIMONY

State functionaries normally paid little attention to the realms of belief and symbolism. When native litigators adduced mythohistoric material in support of claims, they washed it of obviously miraculous features and substituted legally recognizable motifs; for instance, the magical creator of a fertility-giving lake would be recast as the political sponsor of a lake-fed irrigation system. It is primarily via churchmen that we have some testimony about native belief and rite. In another respect, too, Church records tend to be strong where state records are weak: The Church often put resources into mission frontiers (Amazonia, the Orinoco, the Mojos,

⁹ Lilly Library, Indiana University. Latin American Manuscripts: Miguel Huaman Chata, cacique, et al. Causas sobre el curacazgo del pueblo de Quinti [1596-1626] f.145r-146v.

and Paraguay), which had lacked prehispanic states and which Iberian statecraft neglected or avoided.

The earliest Christian missionaries took little interest in “Indian” belief. It was only in the middle 1560s that an intense native religious ferment, itself provoked by Spanish depredations, stimulated Spanish interest in “idolatry.” Unintentionally, persecution opened Spanish eyes to the deepest and least familiar concerns of “Indian history”: the nexus uniting cosmology, landscape, and social organization in a single all-explanatory model.

In the area of Huamanga (now Ayacucho, Peru), a nativist religious revival called *Taki Unquy* (other common spellings: Taki Onqoy, Taqui Oncoy) demanding return to the cults of the prechristian *huacas*, evoked a series of persecutions whose trial records contain a poorly processed but still invaluable group of testimonies about what natives believed to be their vital link to a prehispanic past. Taki Unquy has itself been taken (by Steve Stern) as a revolution in the uses of memory. It required its converts to hark back to their oldest and most localistic pre-Inka deities, but at the same time to begin thinking of them as emblems of a new macro-category – the indigenous – as opposed to the global domain of the foreign. No texts of actual Taki Unquy sermons have been found. Father Luis de Olvera, the original instigator of persecution, said its adherents believed

that God was powerful enough to have created Castile and the Spaniards, and the crops that grow in Castile, but that the *huacas* had been powerful enough to have made this land and the Indians, and the crops and the things that grew in it, and that the Marqués Pizarro, when he entered Caxamarca and conquered the Indians and subjected this kingdom, had done so because God had at that time overcome the *huacas*, but that now, they had all come back to life to do battle with Him and conquer Him, and that the said *huacas* no longer embodied themselves in stones nor in trees nor in springs, as in Inka times, but instead put themselves into the Indians’ bodies and made them speak and then seized them so they trembled saying that they had the *huacas* in their bodies, and they took many of them and painted their faces with a red pigment and put them in enclosures and the Indians went there to adore them as the idol and *huaca* which had gotten into their body.¹⁰

Does South America offer anything comparable with the Mayan *Popol Vuh* – a book of non-Christian religious testimony written in an Ameri-

¹⁰ *El retorno de las huacas. Estudios y documentos del siglo XVI*, Luis Millones, ed. (Lima, 1990), 178.

can language? One such work exists. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, Spaniards had already wrecked the Inka shrines and the major sanctuaries that united belief over huge regions. At the same time, the Church excluded Andeans more and more from its clergy. This squeeze fostered tension between village religious leaders and the swelling colonial clergy. The intranative religious processes of the time are obscure, but it seems some natives clandestinely revived and rethought the cults of ancient divinities (*huacas*). Renewal of *huaca* leadership and protest against clerical exploitation threatened the early colonial *modus vivendi*, which winked at surviving local cults in exchange for toleration of curates' carnal and business excesses. It was in the midst of this ambience, in 1597, that the brilliant bilingual cuzqueño Francisco de Avila took up an important parish in Huarochirí Province. In a few years, he made enemies among local natives by busying them with his illegal enterprises and outraging their persons. When they denounced him to an ecclesiastical court – he was jailed briefly – Avila took revenge by publicizing their adherence to *huacas*. He organized the first of several persecutions that would lash the western Andes through most of the seventeenth century.

In 1607 or 1608, he persuaded someone fully literate in Quechua to compile a detailed report on the Andean religions of his parish and its region, upvalley from the Lima coast. The result, apparently after some editing, was the untitled, undated, and anonymous text known as the *Huarochirí Quechua Manuscript* (preserved in Spain's National Library with a group of other manuscripts Avila once owned). Although Avila used it as a guide to his sleuthing against native priests, and wrote a "Treatise on False Gods" based on part of its content, he never mentioned it explicitly. It was first published in 1939.

Written in Quechua, which had been transformed from the political language of the Inka empire to the "general language" of Spanish missionary campaigns, the Huarochirí manuscript holds a summation of native religious practice and an image of the superhuman powers as imagined around C.E. 1600. Its editor or redactor clearly intended it to be a synthetic, treatise-format totalization of an Andean sacred history, suitable for comparison with Spanish chronicles:

If the ancestors of the people called Indians had known writing in earlier times, then the lives they lived would not have faded from view until now.

As the mighty past of the Spanish Vira Cochis is visible until now, so, too, would theirs be.

But since things are as they are, and since nothing has been written until now,

I set forth here the lives of the ancestors of the Huarero Cheri people, who all descend from one forefather:

What faith they held, how they live up until now, those things and more;

Village by village it will be written down: how they lived from their dawning age onward.¹¹

The oral authors were provincial Indians corralled into “reduction” villages by the 1580s. Few if any of them had been alive when the Spanish invaded. Their lands, stretching from the snowcaps of the western cordillera down toward the river canyons and deltas of the Pacific shore, had by 1600 become thoroughly enmeshed in colonial economy. They vividly remembered the Inka – some of their ancestors had been Inka allies – but their own divinities sacralized local agropastoral, rather than imperial, experience.

The Huarochirí tells envisioned history as an interaction between humans and their patron *huacas*, beginning long before Inka invasion and continuing long after Spanish conquest. A primordial world once belonged to protohumans who won immortality by sacrificing half their children. But new deities with other human allies built a world of war and mortality. Its axis of conflict and synthesis set the stormy powers of the heights, and their human progeny the Yauyos, against the ancient powers of the irrigated coastal valleys whose rich aborigines were the Yuncas. The paramount power of the mountains was Paria Caca (Jaqaru? Paria Kaka?), master of rainstorms, who appeared on a mountain as five eggs, which became five falcons that then became five men. The men were the progenitors of five victorious descent groups. The powers of the coastal valleys, on the other hand, were incarnated in a fivefold female power, Chaupi Ñamca. Some chapters detail a village-level ritual regimen based on balanced interlacing of the two traditions.

Other chapters tell how strange invaders – the Inka, and after them the Spanish – encountered the children of Paria Caca and of Chaupi Ñamca. The chapters about Inkas can to some degree be correlated with politically and legally documented events and with archaeological landmarks. The following episode tells how a highland herdsman who cared

¹¹ *The Huarochirí manuscript, a testament of ancient and colonial Andean religion*, Frank Salomon and George Urioste, trans. (Austin, 1991), 42–43.

for Paria Caca's llama flock prophesied the Spanish invasion; it reflects, in hindsight, desperation about early-colonial epidemics and defeats.

One day they sacrificed one of [Paria Caca's] llamas, a llama named Yauri Huanaca.

When those thirty [priests] examined the heart and entrails of the llama, one of the thirty, a fellow called Quita Pariasca the Mountain Man, spoke up and said, "Alas, brothers, the world is not good! In coming times our father Paria Caca will be abandoned."

"No," the others retorted, "you're talking nonsense!"

"It's a good augury!"

"What do you know?"

One of them called out, "Hey, Quita Pariasca! What makes you think that? In these llama innards our father Paria Caca is foretelling something wonderful!"

But at the time he said that, the mountaineer hadn't even approached the llama to inspect its innards. He had prophesied so just by watching from afar.

The mountaineer spoke out and rebuked them: "It's Paria Caca himself who says it, brothers."

Then they derided Quita Pariasca with spiteful words:

"That smelly mountain man, what could he know?"

"Our father Paria Caca has subjects as far away as the limits of the land called Chinchay Suyu. Could such a power ever fall desolate?"

"What does a guy like that know?"

They talked in great anger.

But just a very few days after the day when he'd said these things, they heard someone say, "Vira Cochas have appeared in Caxa Marca!"

A certain man who was also from Checa, named Tama Lliuya Casa Lliuya, a member of the Caca Sica *ayllu*, is known to have dwelt as one of Paria Caca's retainers.

At that time, they say, there were thirty priests at Paria Caca and this Casa Lliuya Tama Lliuya was the eldest of them all.

When the Vira Cochas, the Spaniards, arrived there, they kept asking insistently, "What about this *huaca*'s silver and garments?"

But the thirty refused to reveal anything.

Because they did, the Spanish Vira Cochas got furious, and, ordering some straw piled up, they burned Casa Lliuya.

When half the straw had burned, the wind began to blow it away.

And so although this man suffered horribly, he did survive.

But by that time the others had handed the clothing and the rest of the things over to the Spaniards.

It was then that all the men said, "Very truly indeed were we warned by this mountain man Quita Pariasca!"

"Brothers, let's go away, let's disband."

"The world is no longer good," they said. And so they dispersed, each going back to his own village.

When the burned man from Checa healed up, he arrived at a village called

Limca in the territory of the Quinti, carrying along a child of Paria Caca named Maca Uisa.¹²

The story is not a counsel of despair. On the contrary, it – like much of the “Indian history” submerged in the convert editor’s “history of Indians” – carries a muffled message of cultural revitalization. The text goes on to tell how Quita Pariasca, by rescuing a *huaca*, brought prosperity to those who carried on cult clandestinely.

Even though some of the people mentioned can be firmly correlated to exterior documents of the period, the chronology of the Huarochiri mythology is hard to assess. The editor or redactor has spliced together data of several time strata to project a fake simultaneity. Remembrances of antiquity share pages with descriptions of priestly law and ritual as practiced in early colonial times and even with reports of contemporary clandestine practice circa 1600. The manipulative editing seems designed to make certain people alive in 1608 look as unambiguously “idolatrous” as possible.

But even if the sources had been spared such manipulation, they would not have embodied a view of diachrony much like that of European historians. The tellers were not chiefly interested in compiling a chain of human causes for human events. Rather, their main preoccupations were “mythohistoric”: They developed a view of time in which the ancestry of living people connected, by a seamless genealogical web, to mummified “ancients,” to *huacas*, thence to deified features of the landscape, and finally to forces of the cosmos itself. To speak of change and genealogy was not a matter of tracing past cause and effect but of mapping out hierarchies of power and sacredness upon a unified pattern that both humanity and nature exemplified.

Ecclesiastical governance like secular governance embedded thousands of other, less massive, native testimonies into administrative papers and lawsuits. The most celebrated are trial records from the “extirpation” campaigns that followed on Avila’s spectacular 1607–1608 exposé about Huarochiri. During several discontinuous campaigns, the last large one being that of the 1660s, squads of Jesuit-trained persecutors wrung origin stories and ancestor-cult data from provincial natives of Lima Archdiocese and, less commonly, other areas. Sporadic persecutions continued past 1700.

“Extirpating judges” learned to pick vulnerable witnesses first. By blackmailing them, or by exploiting their political ambitions and medical

¹² *The Huarochiri manuscript, a testament of ancient and colonial Andean religion*, Frank Salomon and George Urioste, trans. (Austin, 1991), 96–98.

problems, they wrung out secret denunciations. “Extirpators” then captured priests or even humble devotees of clandestine cults. Confession by torture was frequent and legal. The accused typically included local officiants and priestesses of sacred mountains or other place deities, as well as curators of ancestor mummies preserved in caves or “houses of the dead.” There existed, so clerical experts wrote, hierarchies of “ministers,” “masters,” “priests,” and “preachers” dedicated to upholding the faith of the *huacas* during the age of coercive evangelism.

Despite the deformation caused by coercion and the requirement that witnesses explain their culture under the rubric of Satanic deception, “extirpation” trials contain the fullest accounts of ritual and even of visionary experience posterior to the Huarochirí manuscript. They are also one of the few sources rich in information about Andean women as religious actors.

Extirpation records make it clear that remembering what Lima-area natives took to be their history was a main feature of non-Christian worship. In the mid-seventeenth century, over 120 years after the Spanish invasion, a clandestine but major ritual in the town of San Pedro de Hacas evoked public recitations of the deeds of ancestors. Hernando Hacas Poma said that as “indoctrinator” of those who remained faithful to the *huacas*, he organized nighttime rituals during the Christian festivals of Saint Peter and Corpus Christi. Celebrants were careful to assure the *huacas* that despite the daytime rites of the Saints, the festival really honored them.

And this witness [Hacas Poma] and the other old men would pour out a little coca in the plaza and on the night of the festival day, they would perform the *vecochina*, which means that all the local kindreds and residential sectors would go forth, with the priests and ministers of idols in the lead, and the old ladies who accompanied them with small drums would beat them along all the streets, singing chants [*cantares*] and dance-songs of remembrance [*taquies*] in their language and in their ancient style. [They would] recount the stories and ancient deeds of their mummies and their *huacas*, and entering into the houses of the standardbearer[s] of the sodalities, they would drink and get drunk. Until sunrise they continued in these exercises, engaging in contests and team matches between one residential sector and another, without sleeping the whole night through. According to this superstitious belief, the sector or team that fell asleep first, lost, and would suffer affronts about not knowing how to worship their idols right. The team that didn’t sleep would carry off the victory and enjoy high regard, because this was the rite and the ceremony of their paganism.¹³

¹³ *Cultura andina y represión. Procesos y visitas de idolatrías y hechicerías, Cajatambo, siglo XVII*, Pierre Duviols, ed. (Cusco, 1986), 227.