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Llamas, Snakes, and Indigenous Colonial Equivalency in the Andes

Rachel Sarah O'Toole

IN 1656, HERNANDO CARUACHIN TOLD A CATHOLIC CLERIC THAT, IN A DREAM, A DONKEY had told him to come to the Spanish colonial capital of the Peruvian viceroyalty, Lima. Instantly transporting him from the rural highlands to the cosmopolitan coast, the animal escorted Caruachin on a tour of “all the churches of the city.”¹ Caruachin confessed his dream, his demonic communication, and his idolatrous activity. Fittingly, the animal with European origins facilitated Caruachin’s entry into the lettered city, the center of colonial Catholic governance.² The animal all but forced the Indigenous man’s participation. The evangelizing Catholic Church required the neophyte status of Indigenous Andeans to secure its ongoing mission.³ Some Spanish colonizers speculated that those called “Indians” were suspect Catholics who might not have the intellectual and spiritual capabilities to understand the mysteries of the faith.⁴ Caruachin’s invocation of his dream donkey, however, articulated a colonial indigenous Christianity that defied the racial ideologies of clerics and colonial authorities. Caruachin’s dream provided evidence of his knowledge and his confidence with colonizing institutions that radiated from the viceregal city. Caruachin was a known ritual specialist who, in addition to worshipping local and regional deities, claimed equivalency, as an Indigenous Andean, with European colonizers.

Throughout the seventeenth century, as Spanish missionaries and colonial authorities institutionalized Catholic practices and expanded resource extraction throughout the Americas, Indigenous Andeans talked with animals. Speaking directly to donkeys as peer beings with souls in a shared universe, Indigenous Andeans challenged European ontologies that separated humans from beasts.⁵ Simultaneously, Indigenous Andeans adapted European animals voraciously and vigorously, quickly integrating sheep into llama herds while adding pigs and chickens to household corrals of guinea pigs.⁶ Scholars of Indigenous Andeans, however, have primarily approached animals, and their representations, as symbols of political and cultural practices.⁷ In this chapter, I take a more materialist approach to cultural actions. As pastoralists and agriculturalists engaged in a dynamic colonial market economy, Indigenous Andeans spoke in seventeenth-century animal speech acts or did something with the words about and with animals.⁸ A shared language did not ensure understanding. Ontologically unattuned to Indigenous Andean speech acts, Spanish clerics and colonial officials often missed their challenging messages. In this chapter, I examine communications with and about animals, or how Andean speakers did things with words.⁹ I reveal how Andean speakers affirmed Indigenous authority while simultaneously noting their current colonial status.

Andean animal speech acts confronted and conformed to seventeenth-century Spanish colonial attempts to reduce indigenous communities into a singular racial category of Indian. Indigenous Andeans, as Indians, were depicted as unable to fulfill their Christian devotions, perpetually consigned to the legal status of minor, and repeatedly required to pay tribute while serving *mita*, the Spanish colonial labor requirement. At the same time, Indigenous people of the seventeenth-century Andes adapted colonial structures and reinscribed themselves within imperial culture on their own terms.¹⁰ The juxtaposition, and boundary, between Indian pagan others and Christianized Andeans deeply troubled Spanish colonizers. As Catholic clerics searched for a Christian Satan among the animal manifestations of local, regional, and Inca deities, Indigenous Andeans, through their animal speech acts, expressed epistemological disconnects caused by Iberian domination. In other words, Indigenous Andean people looked for solutions to the problems erupting from colonization. Hernando Caruachin elaborated on how the Indigenous religious practices of sacrificing llamas could be repurposed, while inhabitants of Huarochiri named a vengeful serpent who would remake the world. Colonizing clerics and Spanish authorities interpreted the animal speech acts of Indigenous Andeans as proof of Indian otherness, indications of a shared lack of civilization, and a reason for Iberian colonization of the Americas.¹¹ In contrast, speech practices, or acts, regarding specific animal species illuminate how Indigenous Andeans saw themselves as full participants, not marginal Indians, in colonial Christian Peru.¹² By speaking with and about animals, colonial Indigenous Andeans such as Hernando Caruachin defined their place within coloniality as well as articulated their own paradigms of value and change.

THE VALUE OF LLAMAS AND DONKEYS

For colonial Indigenous Andeans, the voices and the bodies of domestic animals communicated a strategic blending of known and new practices. Llamas provided Indigenous Andeans with life's most basic necessities, including wool for textiles, dung for fertilizer and fuel, and meat to consume. At a smaller scale and raised literally in one's home, guinea pigs were a ready source of protein. Sacrifices of these animals punctuated life cycles of birth, the growth of children, marriage, and death. By the mid-seventeenth century, the domestic livestock originating in Europe were also integral to the Andean world. As skilled pastoralists, practiced agriculturalists, and expert hydrologists, Indigenous Andeans celebrated the fecundity of chickens and pigs along with the strength of oxen and donkeys. Animals, new and old, fit into desired tasks so that Indigenous Andeans instilled value into colonial livestock.¹³ Speaking with and through animals, Indigenous Andeans chose among European and American species based on the task, the market, and the outcome.

Nonetheless, after a century of Christian evangelization, Indigenous Andeans continued to prefer llamas and guinea pigs in their communications with local deities. Colonial Andeans thanked *huacas* (deities) or ancestors with a llama or guinea pig sacrifice in May or June during Catholic Corpus Christi celebrations and while maize matured.¹⁴ Ancestors and local deities who fed on llamas protected the well-being of communities and people's herds from predators.¹⁵ Guinea pigs, sacrificed in pastures and corrals, would generate productive llama herds and ensured the flow of water in irrigation canals.¹⁶ Explaining to missionaries in anti-idolatry trials, Andean Indigenous witnesses elaborated how they and their neighbors sacrificed the blood,

bodies, or fat of these Andean animals to community deities in order to ensure good weather and a good harvest.¹⁷ Having been fed, deities released water from mountain springs or diverted torrents from glacier lakes that could flood fields.¹⁸ Llama and guinea pig sacrifices marked life-cycle events, including when a child was old enough for their first haircut.¹⁹ Clearly, Indigenous Andeans spoke to their deities in the animal speech acts that had previously worked before colonization to generate fecundity and prosperity.

Animal speech acts also worked within colonial Christian religious practices. As Kenneth Mills has deftly argued, Indigenous Andeans conjoined their own rites with Catholic feast days.²⁰ Indigenous Andeans also respected religious specialists who employed Catholic rituals and symbols. In fact, Indigenous Andean assistants to Catholic clerics and idolatry inspectors such as sacristans and interpreters, key figures in the evangelization process, continued to engage in local and regional religious practices. For example, leaders of rural indigenous confraternities devoted to Catholic saints performed animal sacrifices to local Andean deities.²¹ Indigenous people also relied on the potency of Andean animals when practicing Christianity. In the early 1740s, Domingo García testified to Catholic inspectors that “he planned to smear llama’s blood on the foundation and adobe walls of a new local church ‘to make it strong.’”²² Indigenous Andean people had been drenching new houses and buildings with the blood of llamas and guinea pigs throughout (and before) the seventeenth century.²³ As a parish church became the site of community gatherings, a display for local lineages, and where people buried their dead, why not ensure its longevity with a well-known sacred communication?

With their encompassing and ever-present power, protective llamas reminded colonial Indigenous Andeans of their religious obligations. Indigenous Andeans sacrificed llamas to divine the future and diagnosis illness.²⁴ In turn, llama deities demanded payment. A converted Catholic Andean testified that despite his best efforts to rid himself of “idolatry,” local deities continued to seek him out. Don Cristóbal Choque Casa worked for the religious inspector of Huarochirí and, according to historian Alan Durston, was one of the few indigenous people to have produced a colonial written text in Quechua.²⁵ In a remarkable account of his personal spiritual struggle, Don Cristóbal explained that the “demon” appeared to him in a colonial form with decidedly Andean imagery. The indigenous assistant of the Catholic anti-idolatry campaigns described a painting of a small black demon with silver eyes holding a staff, including floating images of a llama head, the small demon, and another llama head. Frightened by a clear manifestation of an Andean deity, whose worship he had publicly abandoned and famously disparaged, Don Cristóbal confronted his vision with a declaration of his Christian faith.²⁶ In response, the llama-head deity spoke in the language of indigenous Andean deities. By eating or being fed, the deity received reciprocal nourishment from Don Cristóbal, and then expanded from a singular form “into a twofold pattern,” to manifest as an Andean woven textile that “encircled the whole house.”²⁷ While Don Cristóbal recalled the dream as an attack on his Christian credentials, in many ways the llama-head deity demanded that the proselytizing Christian Andean reengage and speak again to Huarochirí’s animal sacred.

Andean deities employed animal speech acts to call attention to the exceptional value of their esteemed sacred beasts. In 1656, the elderly widow Leonor Rimay declared to a priest in the Canta region that the “demon” had appeared to her as a black llama. Missionizing clerics clearly took animalistic devotions as disparaging proof of Indian domestic idolatry and the abominable imperviousness of Indigenous Andeans to Christian conversion. Indeed, while the elderly Indigenous woman was not specific about the season, the former rulers of the Andes, the Incas, had sacrificed black llamas in March in order to encourage crops to mature.²⁸ The animal



Figure 1. A black llama conopa. Hamilton, *Scale & the Incas*, 61–62.

manifestations communicated clear economic value well into the seventeenth century. Using black stone (commonly basalt) prized for its rare color, colonial Indigenous Andeans employed figures of black llamas, or *conopas*, like the one pictured in figure 1, to petition for the good health and increase of their herds.²⁹

Small in size, easy to transport, and incorporated into individual or household shrines, black llama *conopas* were rarely found by idolatry inspectors, except if revealed by community members.³⁰ Leonor Rimay's confession, therefore, was rare. She explained that, when she was a young unmarried woman, she had gone to a nearby stream when the black llama appeared and spoke to her directly, asking "what she was doing here."³¹ When she replied that she had come to drink (or take) its water, the llama followed her home, perhaps demanding its required offering, which she did not provide. The llama deity was right to ask. Throughout the seventeenth century, sacred beings throughout the Andes lamented their hunger and poverty since their abandonment by their former followers.³² Coming empty-handed to the stream, Leonor Rimay had insulted the black llama deity, who she suggested caused her subsequent illness, or the costs of Catholic conversion.

Llamas and guinea pigs remained steadfast currencies of Andean livelihoods. Andeans measured their own wealth and the wealth of others based on the size and diversity of llama herds.³³ Likewise, Indigenous Andeans relied on old ways of increasing their herds and flocks. Despite the attempts of Catholic clerics, colonial Indigenous Andeans continued to place small llama *conopas* (as pictured in figure 1) in pastures in order to increase the fertility of herds.³⁴ In dense animal speech acts, Indigenous Andeans activated these llama figures with llama fat, inserted in a hole on the top, to encourage fertility, multiplication, and prosperity.³⁵ As measles, smallpox, and other new illnesses rolled through the Andes, indigenous people petitioned for relief from their deities with the previous practices of sacrifices of llamas and guinea pigs.³⁶ Notably, European

animals could not communicate with Andean deities in these moments of need. During annual purification events, local deities were petitioned for health, prosperity, and productivity in the fields and herds. In particular, local deities demanded that their followers eat only llamas and guinea pigs, avoiding European animals such as pigs in a complete separation from Spanish elements, reminiscent of the late sixteenth-century resistance movement Taki Onqoy.³⁷ Speaking with llamas and guinea pigs, Indigenous Andeans of the seventeenth century declared their authority as well as that of local deities to determine a healthy future.

At the same time, by actively adapting new animal species, Indigenous Andean people communicated an equivalency with Europeans. By the seventeenth century, European livestock were abundantly interchangeable in the animal speech acts of Indigenous Andeans. The colonial indigenous chronicler Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala explained that inhabitants tended herds of sheep, goats, and alpaca with llamas and depicted successful Andean households with their pigs, cattle, and chickens.³⁸ Familiar animals of the Andes did not disappear from the colonial landscape or conversation, but were called on to solve new problems. With guinea pig sacrifices, colonial Indigenous Andeans asked deities for laborers to work in their fields and corrals that had been previously maintained by kin who had migrated, disappeared, or now worked on Spanish colonial enterprises.³⁹ As Andean religious practices merged with Catholicism, the goods of local deities included herds of sheep and goats as well as llamas and guinea pigs.⁴⁰ Indigenous witnesses accused local ritual specialists of endangering camelid herds and mules along with cattle.⁴¹ Others testified that local ritual specialists employed their skills to locate missing horses and mules, ensure the health of sheep, and maintain the production of hens.⁴² The species of animals had clearly changed, but not the sacred use of livestock among Andean pastoralists.

Llamas and guinea pigs, nevertheless, retained potency. In 1657, an indigenous leader of San Pedro de Hacas explained to the inspecting Catholic cleric that he had sacrificed a llama and guinea pigs to local deities. In order to serve his community well, he had petitioned for assistance to govern peacefully, be respected by his subjects, and be recognized by other Indigenous leaders.⁴³ Familiar animals, therefore, were required for the political work of Indigenous leaders who collected tribute, organized labor demands, and oversaw their community's obligations to the Spanish colonial state. Similarly, an Indigenous *cacique* or leader from Cajatambo asked a religious specialist to sacrifice a llama and guinea pigs in order to ensure his son's success at the Jesuit boarding school in the Cercado, Lima's official Indian ward. Don Juan de Mendosa asked that his son, Don Alonso, learn how "to read and to write, coming out as a good, lettered man."⁴⁴ With the skills of literacy, the young leader would be able to compose legal writs in colonial courts, keep the community's archives, and read the orders issued by colonial authorities.⁴⁵ Don Juan wished to ensure that his son had the necessary skills to assume the mediating role of a colonial Indigenous leader, as he petitioned the ancestral deities with additional sacrifices.⁴⁶ Animals, therefore, communicated how Indigenous Andean men meant to level the playing field with Spanish colonizers.

In animal speech acts, Indigenous Andeans articulated their versions of colonial hierarchies. According to Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, the first inhabitants of the Andes were descendants of Adam, and therefore Christians, long before the arrival of the Spanish.⁴⁷ In his retelling of the past, llamas coexisted with sheep in an ancient Andean world that was co-equivalent with the Biblical landscape. Equal to European animals, a llama climbed aboard Noah's Ark along with sheep, goats, and cattle as pictured in figure 2.

Speaking through the value of animals, indigenous intellectuals such as Guaman Poma argued for the religious and cultural equivalency of Andean people with Spanish Christians.

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DE NOE

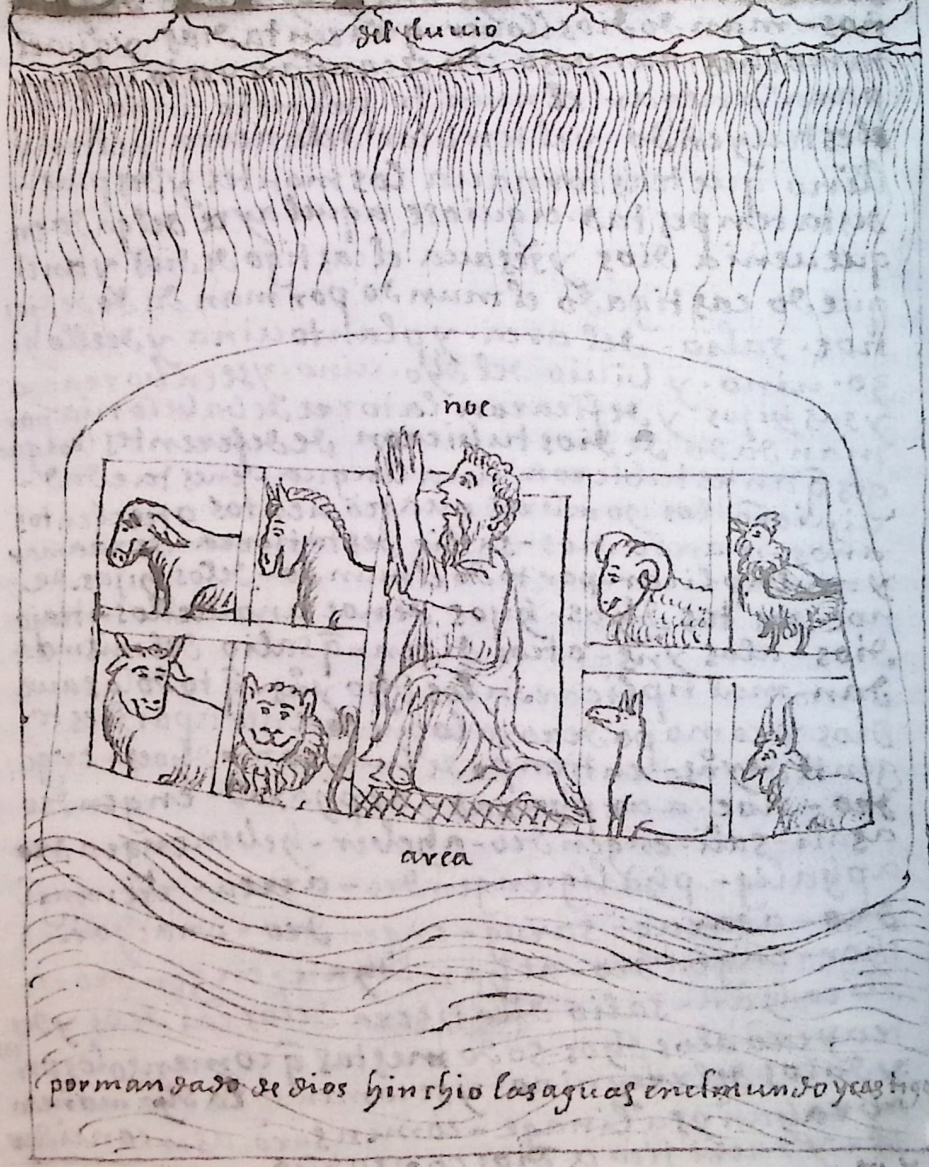


Figure 2. Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, "The Second Epoch of the World: Noah," *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (c. 1615), page 24. Royal Danish Library, GKS 2232 kvart.

According to Guaman Poma, even ancient Indigenous Andeans raised livestock such as alpacas and llamas, and therefore were not “savage animals” as colonizing Europeans might suggest.⁴⁸ Other Indians, however, were more suspect. Repeatedly, Guaman Poma demoted Incas (who he blamed for Andean idolatry) by depicting their households as filled with monkeys and birds, animals that Indigenous highland Andeans categorically associated with the uncivilized Amazon.⁴⁹ Contemporary rivals were also worthy of animalistic devaluation. According to the colonial Indigenous chronicler, Colla people were “the biggest animals” due to their wealth, their size, and their tendency to only eat and sleep.⁵⁰ With animal speech acts, Guaman Poma put himself on par as a Christian Indigenous man with the Spanish to demonstrate how literate Andeans shared origins as well as histories with the colonizers.

European animals, still, were coveted. Guaman Poma repeatedly depicted the Spanish conquerors “on top of their horses,” furiously, armed and angry, riding into battle.⁵¹ More than fear of horses, Guaman Poma communicated the expense of horses and the privilege of nobility who rode on horseback while Incas and Indigenous Andeans suffered colonial abuses from the ground.⁵² Judgmental and envious, Guaman Poma constructed colonial gender and racial hierarchies when describing who had access to horses. The Indigenous chronicler accused acculturated Indigenous men who served Spaniards and who associated with Black men of stealing horses as well as llamas, patronizing Indigenous “whores,” and encouraging the proliferation of mixed-race children. In his racist and misogynist version of the colonial Andean world, a Black man, in service to a Spaniard, mounts a horse while Guaman Poma portrays himself walking beside his own trusty steed.⁵³ Notorious for his disparagement of independent Black men, Guaman Poma clearly could not recognize Afro-Andean men as equal to or superior to Indigenous men.⁵⁴ Still beholden to colonial hierarchies, Guaman Poma avoided showing himself astride the horse, the paramount symbol of Spanish conquest. Speaking with animals, the colonial Indigenous chronicler sadly placed himself below the Spanish yet above Africans and Afro-Andeans.

By the seventeenth century, Indigenous Andeans understood that the Spanish invasion had irrevocably changed their sacred and economic landscape. Famine and epidemics combined with excessive tribute collection, colonial demands for labor, and repeated assaults on Indigenous sacred environments had ruptured Andean community connections. In their animal speech acts, Indigenous Andeans nonetheless revealed their creative adaptation to the possibilities of the new colonial world. Explaining a dream or vision to the clerical inspectors, Hernando Caruachin of Guamantanga confessed that a donkey appeared, wanting to take him to Lima’s San Sebastián church.⁵⁵ Located at the edge of the viceregal capital, the multiracial urban neighborhood was home to urban Indigenous migrants as well as enslaved and free Africans.⁵⁶ Relocating to this urban environment would have allowed an Indigenous person to take advantage of the teeming markets of labor and trade of the vibrant colonial city. The European animal facilitated Caruachin’s fantastical, but also mystical, tour of Lima’s churches, then returning the religious specialist to his home in the rural highlands.⁵⁷ By expertly naming the donkey as his spiritual guide, Caruachin, like many colonial Indigenous Andeans, inserted himself as a protagonist in the ruptures and opportunities of Spanish colonialism.

SERPENTINE CHANGE

The Andes, even in ancient times, were an uneven terrain where wealthy lords suffered from their disastrous boasting and poor beggars were revealed as deities. Colonial authorities, however,

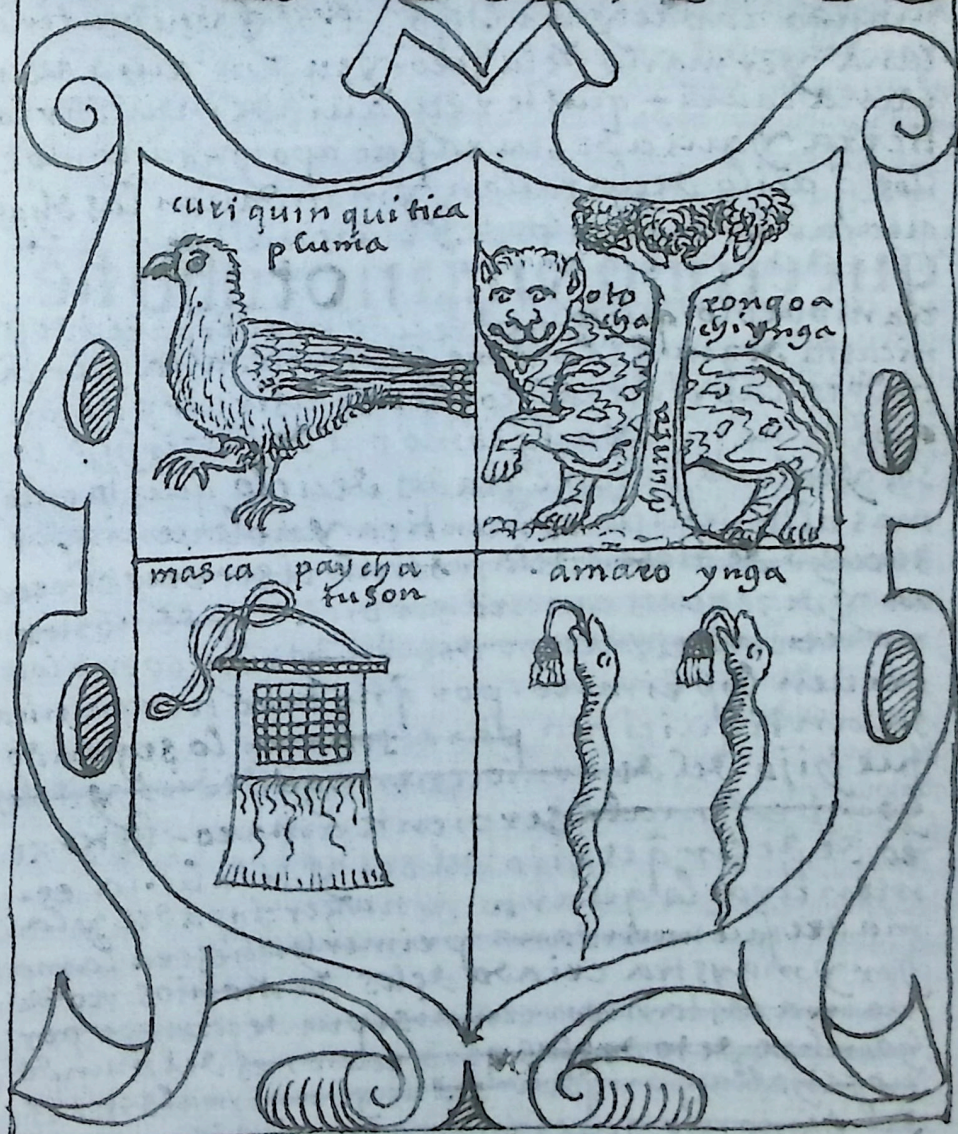
communicated a binary worldview of sin and redemption where crimes were punished according to a person's categorization as Indian, Spanish, or Black. Countering their new rulers, Indigenous Andeans spoke in puma speech acts to disparage how the Spanish ruled. Instead of acting as predator protectors like the Incas, Guaman Poma explained how Spanish soldiers and other private colonizers were pumas who caught and devoured Indigenous people of colonial towns without giving back.⁵⁸ Indeed, the reciprocity among subjects and leaders or between prey and predators had eroded in the colonial era. According to the Indigenous chronicler, the Spanish *encomendero* entered Indigenous Andean towns and, with his claws, caught and did not pardon his Indigenous subjects.⁵⁹ In puma speech acts, Guaman Poma explained that the Spanish rulers were at the greatest fault since "these said animals do not fear God, skinning the Indian poor of this kingdom."⁶⁰ As a result, the prey or the Indigenous Andean subjects feared a colonial puma sovereign in his manifestation as a Spaniard, who demanded excessive tribute payments and labor obligations that included horrific and denigrating sexual assaults.

Responding to colonial violence, Indigenous Andean parishioners heard the Biblical snake speech acts of Spanish priests as a sign of change. Catholic clerics unequivocally employed serpents to represent the devil, the presence of evil, and the manifestation of Satan.⁶¹ Yet, Indigenous Andeans came to adapt European snake speech acts but did not imagine their serpentine sacred beings as categorically diabolic. Indigenous Andeans worked with a wider serpentine vocabulary. Snake talk included alternative names and metaphors for the poisonous snake of the highlands, the large boa of the lowlands, and the celestial rainbow deity, including a warning of an *amaru* who would destroy as well as remake the world.

Unsurprisingly, snake speech acts were entangled with a process of remedy and healing for Indigenous Andeans. Elderly ritual specialists, both men and women, were reported to have removed snakes as well as spiders, worms, toads, and stones from sick people.⁶² Ontologically, worms and toads meant sickness, evil, and maleficence to the Spanish just as Indigenous Andean witnesses, by the seventeenth century, associated these and other witchcraft practices with women's sexual misconduct, such as a wife's adultery, another common European association. Simultaneously, snakes and toads were part of a potent community of inanimate and animate actors for Indigenous Andeans.⁶³ According to the informants in Huarochirí, a local deity cured a local lord by removing two snakes and a two-headed toad from his house.⁶⁴ The elite man regained his health once the animals were dislodged. Andeans worked to coordinate with animals and work with their possibilities. Witnesses explained to missionizing clerics that ritual specialist Isabel Poma Corua took out snakes and spiders as well as dispensed remedies to women in order to encourage men's love.⁶⁵ The inspecting Catholic clerics framed Poma Corua as a witch engaged in love magic. But, ritual Andean specialists did not attend to an evil that lay, fixed, within a human body as understood within an early modern Iberian framework. According to colonial Indigenous Andeans, ordinary humans could not bodily hold snakes as the serpentine destabilized only the most able religious practitioner.⁶⁶ To Europeans, these animals were always vile, but to Indigenous Andeans, their power to harm resided in their location—remove them from the "wrong" place, and their existence was no longer objectionable.

Snake talk, then, appeared when Indigenous Andeans engaged in anxious conversations over the consequences of colonialism. When questioned by Catholic missionaries, Indigenous Andeans denounced witchcraft practitioners in their communities, but also confessed their own sins or Andean religious practices. In animal speech acts, misunderstood by Spanish colonizers, Indigenous Andeans explained that their bodies were filled with spiders and snakes that, with the assistance of local healers, they vomited into their hands.⁶⁷ Hardly markers of inherent evil,

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Figure 3. Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, "The Second Coat of Arms of the Inka," *Nueva coronica y buen gobierno* (c. 1615), page 83. Royal Danish Library, GKS 2232 kvart.

these Andean animals brought messages to the present world that included “a broad framework of assumptions” mediated through the punishing inquiries of the inspecting Catholic clerics, but also filtered within the process of physical and spiritual Andean cures.⁶⁸ If taken as “a framework of metaphysical ideas,” then Indigenous Andeans wondered, through the creatures of the underground, what they were paying for in their sacrifices.⁶⁹ Were local deities hungry or disappointed with their Catholic conversion or migrations away from places of origin?⁷⁰ What was the sickness or misfortune that Indigenous Andeans needed to expel?⁷¹ In the mid-seventeenth century, Indigenous Andeans contemplated the effects of their consumption and adaptation of Spanish colonialism.

Sacred and timely messages of current colonial predicaments often arrived through snakes and birds. Indigenous witnesses explained to inspecting clerics that ritual specialists would predict coming disasters such as sickness by observing the movement of snakes, or listening to the songs of small owls (as well as other birds).⁷² According to one Indigenous colonial litigator, two elderly brothers near Otuco (in Cajatambo) were able to predict deaths in the community by their close attention to snakes and birds.⁷³ Animals warned rather than judged. If Catholic clerics feared the appearance of snakes as signs of the devil, Indigenous Andeans sought out the serpentine. As Juan Huaraz and Juan Chuchu confessed to missionizing clerics, listening to snake and bird speech acts allowed them to warn people of a future that included loss of property, bad harvests, lack of food, or other disasters associated with Spanish colonialism.⁷⁴ More critically, snake speech acts elaborated on the protection that Indigenous Andeans required to survive the illnesses that wiped out their communities, along with the tribute and debt obligations that could cause families to migrate. With the assistance of these animal translators, Indigenous Andeans could be forewarned and take action.

The *amaru*, most of all, was a just ruler of the Andes. Whether Inca royalty or local nobility, colonial Andean lords represented their claims to sovereignty with the visual rhetoric of two straight snakes.⁷⁵ Most notably on their newly Spanish-sanctioned coat of arms, petitioners in Spanish courts, Indigenous nobles in Cuzco, and other political actors in the transitional sixteenth and seventeenth centuries demonstrated their nobility by creating new colonial visual representations that included pairs of snakes with gold crowns or sprouting rainbows.⁷⁶ As illustrated in figure 3, Guaman Poma represents a colonial Inca herald with two vertical snakes holding tassels in their mouths in the lower right corner, labeled as *Amaru Inca*.⁷⁷ The colonial chronicler associated the paired vertical snakes with the headdress fringe (pictured to the left in the herald) that connoted Inca rulers before and immediately following the Spanish conquest, as well as into the colonial period.⁷⁸ Elevated from the everyday snake talk, the *amaru* speech act allowed Guaman Poma to amplify the Inca's claim of lineage and right to rule.⁷⁹ In the colonial media of royal heraldry, the vertical paired *amaru*, however rendered, communicated how Incas claimed sovereignty of the Andes even under Spanish dominion.

Colonial Indigenous Andeans, then, heard snake speech acts much like governmental mandates. For one thing, unlike an early modern European condemnation of the serpentine, people of the Andes understood particular types of snakes as ancestral providers. The Incas had appropriated a widely shared Indigenous Andean belief in an ancestral snake, or *amaru*, that Guaman Poma explained existed in the period before humans learned how to make clothing and build houses.⁸⁰ Taking multiple forms, the ancestral serpent included the Snake-belt deity who was known to have taught northern coastal Indigenous Andeans how to fish as well as hunt, and even defended the Moche people against threatening monsters.⁸¹ An ancestor as well as a creator, the Moche snake deity suggests what colonial Indigenous Andeans could have expected from the

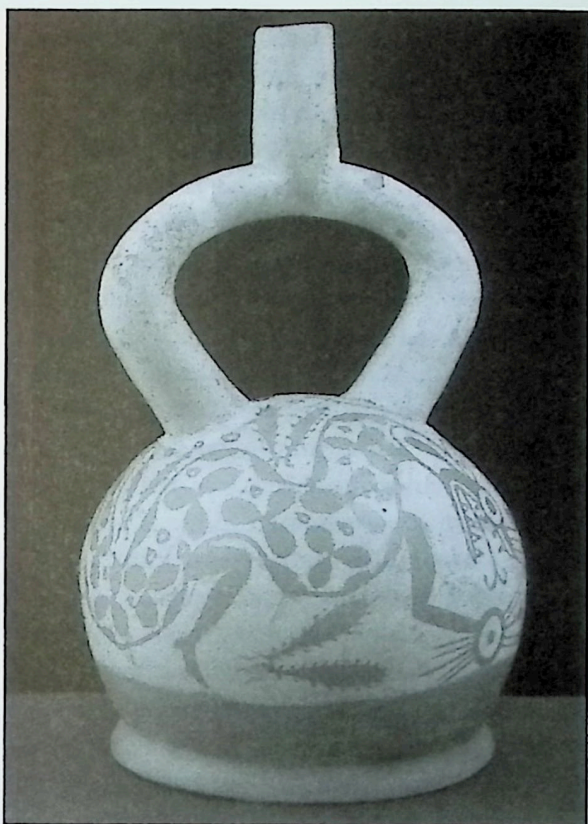


Figure 4. Moche stirrup spout vessel. Penn Museum, object number 51-14-2.

serpentine. According to the early seventeenth-century testimonies from Huarochirí, snakes directed the making of critical irrigation canals, leaving their names to these essential technologies of the arid Andean landscape.⁸² Most potently, twentieth-century residents recounted, a snake with golden braids emerged when their regional irrigation canal flowed with water.⁸³ The snake, then, was an overseeing, regional, and ancestral unifying force who, however potent and dangerous, was welcomed by past and present Indigenous Andeans.

Serpentine speech acts were multivocal in the Andes. As Juan Carlos Estenssoro and other scholars have suggested, a snake was also a dragonlike beast with arms, ears, wings, fangs, and whiskers or a beard.⁸⁴ In this manifestation, the snake or *amaru* could not be rendered in a straight line as in figure 3, but more as a serpentine lizard or uncontained beast as suggested by the Moche depiction in figure 4.

This *amaru*—perhaps an anaconda or a boa—would have been simultaneously monstrous and glorious, a foe worthy of the Incas and additional to the signifiers of straight paired snakes.⁸⁵ The *amaru* continued to be a challenging signifier into the eighteenth century with the rebellion of the colonial Inca José Gabriel Condorcanqui. His chosen revolutionary name of Tupac Amaru invoked the last legitimate Inca ruler assassinated by the Spanish in the sixteenth century, but also signaled a claim to the returning rule of the Royal Serpent.⁸⁶ Therefore, when Indigenous Andeans engaged in *amaru* speech acts, they discussed the Inca right to rule, but also anticipated political challenges that could exceed the current state sovereignty.

In the seventeenth century, Indigenous Andeans invoked the *amaru*, then, to clear a way for transformation. When Domingo Rimachim confessed his idolatrous practices to missioning clerics in 1656, he described a regional deity who could appear in a snake-like form and came to eat people.⁸⁷ Rimachim, like other Indigenous Andeans, may have thought that their betrayal of local

deities had caused the spiritual threat that included deadly epidemics and religious persecution.⁸⁸ Yet, the appearance of a consuming and threatening *amaru* did not portend sinful punishment. Accused by the inspecting clerics, elderly Indigenous Andean woman Francisca Carguachuqui explained that she was terrified by the demands made by the *amaru*. The “deformed serpent . . . with a beard that seemed like fire” demanded white and black corn to eat, or he would eat her.⁸⁹ Indeed, the *amaru* was a creature or fire-monster that the people of Huarochirí warned would “bring misfortune.”⁹⁰ Yet, Carguachuqui had appeased the *amaru* by feeding the demanding deity.⁹¹ Sacrifice to the *amaru*, she anticipated, would facilitate, or allow the necessary change that she and other Indigenous Andeans expected the serpentine would bring.

Indigenous Andeans then imagined their *amaru* conversations could bring salvation. Indeed, the *amaru* of Cajatambo had been tamed because a ritual specialist had appeared and prayed to the regional deity.⁹² When examined from an Indigenous Andean ontology, *amaru* speech acts were filled with sensations of physical transformation and shifting futures. As the elderly man Chaupis Condor recalled to inspecting clerics, a big snake was known to his community as Guayaura, “who walked under the earth and made the mountains shake.”⁹³ Hardly an idol or a demon to Indigenous Andeans, this *amaru* was powerful and tremendous, but familiar and named. Likewise, informants of Huarochirí recounted how a former huge snake was now known as a stone called Amaru. In the early seventeenth century, Indigenous Andeans struck chips off the rock to carry as protection against disease.⁹⁴ For Indigenous Andean people, the *amaru*—on the ground in everyday life—was a threatening and fierce protector.

Through *amaru* speech acts, Indigenous Andean people articulated their desires for responsible higher-level authority. Hernando Chaupis Condor explained to seventeenth-century missionizing clerics that in the past a big snake, or *culebrón*, went about eating community members and tearing them to shreds.⁹⁵ Likewise, the informants in early seventeenth-century Huarochirí recounted how a lowlands fire-monster unleashed a huge two-headed snake “called the Amaru” in order to defeat his sacred rival.⁹⁶ In both cases, the regional deity thankfully intervened, and changed the threatening snake into a local *huaca* or sacred stone. Colonial Indigenous Andeans were well aware of their need for protection from similar threats. They remarked that in contrast to the *amaru*'s power, potential, and promise, Spanish authorities could not contain the current poverty, labor demands, and diseases of the seventeenth century. According to Guaman Poma, as a serpent, the colonial Spanish magistrate ate people and ate life, including the insides of a person, “taking him like a fierce animal.”⁹⁷ Indigenous Andeans clearly did not equate the Spanish authority with a ritual specialist who could appeal to a serpentine deity. Rather, in their *amaru* speech acts, Indigenous Andeans suggested that the colonial Spanish magistrate *was* a consumptive deity who required management, sacrifice, and transformation. Yet, as Guaman Poma explained, the serpent colonial magistrate only destroyed indigenous resources with excessive consumption.⁹⁸ How could he be stopped if the Spanish did not believe or did not understand? Guaman Poma appears to frame the magistrate as a European serpent let loose in the Andean Garden of Eden, hardly capable of *amaru* transformation.

Colonial Indigenous Andeans saw themselves, through their *amaru* speech acts, as capable of bringing about the next version of the world. In its abstract form of the rainbow or geometric design, the serpentine provided a means of transition for Indigenous Andean people.⁹⁹ In Cajatambo, Indigenous Andeans testified to missionizing clerics of their dreams or visions that a snake with tail feathers came from the high plateaus to drink river waters, while Francisca Carguachuqui explained that the *amaru* approached her at a mountain spring.¹⁰⁰ The result of such a rainbow appearance would be agricultural prosperity, procreative energy, reproduction,

and regulated irrigation.¹⁰¹ Inquiring clerics associated snakes with the demonic, and Indigenous Andeans responded to explain that snakes came with messages of death.¹⁰² Spanish clerics, it would seem, could not understand the radically incommensurable snake discourse of Indigenous Andeans.¹⁰³ In *amaru* speech acts, snakes returned to the surface to foretell the shifting of the current world, and perhaps the coming of the next.¹⁰⁴ In the process, some, but not all, Indigenous Andeans would perish; but most importantly the Spanish occupation and their demotion as idolatrous Indians would be wiped away.

CONCLUSIONS

In the seventeenth century, Spanish clerics and colonial administrators throughout predominately rural communities turned Indigenous Andeans into colonial Indians. Indigenous Andeans who spoke multiple languages and identified according to regional polities were “reduced” by Catholic clerics and colonial authorities into colonial villages to pay tribute, serve the colonial labor demand of *mita*, and practice Christianity. Designated as legal minors, targeted as laborers for colonial enterprises, and questioned as members of humanity, Spanish colonizers created the early modern racial category of Indian throughout the Americas by imposing uniform expectations onto heterogenous populations.¹⁰⁵ Colonial Indigenous Andeans, though, were agential within colonial processes through their animal speech acts. Llamas, like Andean economies, were still valuable, even if pigs and chickens presented new possibilities. Supernatural serpents, whether embodied in ceramics, stone, or irrigation canals, provided the means to employ colonial litigation as well as Andean religiosity.¹⁰⁶ Indigenous Andeans adapted to colonial impositions, demanding wages as laborers in silver mines and exploiting the vast markets in textiles and foodstuffs fueled by Iberian extraction.¹⁰⁷ Indigenous Andeans employed colonial courts to secure hereditary lands, appealed to the Spanish crown in order to reduce tribute demands, and integrated beliefs into everyday Catholicism.¹⁰⁸ Indigenous Andeans, most critically, engaged in animal speech acts in ways that could not be absorbed or comprehended by European colonizers. Animals and actions allowed Indigenous Andeans to encourage rescue from epidemics, famine, and sacred destruction within Spanish colonialism. Most critically, Indigenous Andeans spoke to each other through animal speech acts regarding how to worship, what to expect, and what to envision for the future.

NOTES

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1. “*Visitass y procesos*,” 238.
2. Rama, *Lettered City*, 19.
3. Durston, *Pastoral Quechua*, 175.

4. Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 102, 161.
5. Costa, "Making Animals," 96–97; Kohn, *How Forests*, 9; Norton, "Chicken or the *Iegue*," 24; Viveiros de Castro, "Cosmological Deixis," 470, 472, 479.
6. Donkin, "Peccary: With Observations," 43; Flores Ochoa, *Pastoralists of the Andes*, 26.
7. For example, see Urton, *Animal Myths*.
8. For speech acts, see Austin, *Works of J.L. Austin*, 13.
9. Taylor, "How to Do Things," 529, 531, 535; Vourloumis, "Doing Things," 53.
10. By obeying European frameworks, Andean leaders created a distinct Indigenous literacy, negotiated the location of colonial *reducciones*, and adapted Catholic iconography to fit local needs. Cohen Suarez, *Heaven, Hell*, 11, 73; De la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 11; Mumford, *Vertical Empire*, 132; Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered*, 149, 153.
11. Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 189, 211.
12. Indigenous Andeans negotiated their cosmopolitan vassalage in colonial courts, translated Inca authority into Catholic festivities, and embedded their pre-Hispanic values into colonial property holdings. De la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 124–25; Dean, *Inka Bodies*, 95; Graubart, "Shifting Landscapes," 68; Rappaport, *Disappearing Mestizo*, 202–3.
13. Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, 218, 237; De la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 50; Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered*, 153.
14. "Visitas y procesos," 332; *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 84. For a contemporary association, see Platt, "From the Island's Point of View," 39.
15. "Visitas y procesos," 265, 299, 301, 503; *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 100.
16. "Visitas y procesos," 411, 418, 421, 464, 515, 519, 739; *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 142, 143.
17. "Visitas y procesos," 226, 237, 297, 327, 338, 389, 390, 392, 395, 409, 416, 420, 429, 430, 435, 449, 452, 453, 454, 459, 481, 504; Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 267.
18. "Visitas y procesos," 171, 217, 269, 329, 345, 369, 416, 429, 430, 431, 433, 445, 446, 448, 449, 451, 454, 484, 628.
19. "Visitas y procesos," 449.
20. Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 254; "Visitas y procesos," 175, 202, 205, 208.
21. "Visitas y procesos," 426, 451.
22. Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 263.
23. "Visitas y procesos," 209, 253, 255, 257, 276, 279.
24. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 881. Cobo cited in Cowie, *Llama*, 43.
25. Durston, "Cristóbal Choquecasa," 151, 153.
26. Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 228.
27. *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 109. For a discussion of how textile patterns work in Andean sacred spaces, see Cohen Suarez, *Heaven, Hell*, 117. For discussion of eating, feeding, and offering to Indigenous Andean deities, see Brosseder, *Power of Huacas*, 185; Salomon, "Introductory Essay," 17.
28. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 241.
29. Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 94; Hamilton, *Scale and the Incas*, 61.
30. "Visitas y procesos," 685, 701.
31. "Apéndice documental," 249.
32. Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun*, 184–85.
33. *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 55, 102, 138, 139, 140, 147, 152.
34. "Visitas y procesos," 111, 496, 503, 505; Cowie, *Llama*, 45.
35. Hamilton, *Scale and the Incas*, 69.
36. "Visitas y procesos," 267, 297, 405, 454, 484, 504, 799; "Apéndice documental," 248; Mills, *Idolatry*

- and *Its Enemies*, 64–65. Guinea pigs were acceptable, but deities preferred the more generous gift of llamas. Brosseder, *Power of Huacas*, 175, 183. The main mountain deity of Huarochiri named and loved the first llama to reach his summit during the annual fiesta, accepting llama sacrifices in protection of the deceased. *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 72–74.
37. "Visitas y procesos," 359, 399, 412, 419, 444, 600; Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 177.
 38. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 11, 40, 1149, 1150, 1158.
 39. "Visitas y procesos," 411.
 40. "Apéndice documental," 241, 249; Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 43.
 41. Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, Visitas de Hechicerías e Idolatrías. Legajo 3. Exp. 1 (1650), 1, 3.
 42. Apéndice documental," 244.
 43. "Visitas y procesos," 452, 454.
 44. "Visitas y procesos," 383.
 45. De la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 105; Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered*, 114, 171.
 46. "Visitas y procesos," 390.
 47. Adorno, *Guaman Poma*, 100; Ossio A., *En busca del orden*, 26.
 48. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 60.
 49. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 133, 143; Norton, "The Chicken or the *Iegue*," 44.
 50. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 178.
 51. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 383, 163, 169, 170.
 52. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 174, 209, 524, 527, 531, 606, 676, 681, 684, 693; De la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 116; Lamana, *Domination without Dominance*, 104–5.
 53. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 929, 1083, 1095.
 54. O'Toole, *Bound Lives*, 160.
 55. "Visitas y procesos," 238, 458.
 56. Bell and Ramón, "Making Urban Colonial Lima," 110; Gómez, "*Nuestra Señora*," 85; Lowry, "Forging an Indian Nation," 80, 234.
 57. Charles, *Allies at Odds*, 146; Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 241.
 58. Indigenous Andean men and women confessed visitations from pumas who, though named as demons by missionizing priests, delivered messages of escape. As María Ticllaguacho, an Indigenous Andean widow of Guamantanga, explained, a black puma appeared to her, telling her to live with him and never return to the colonial settlement. "Apéndice documental," 255; Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 899; Zuidema, "Lion in the City," 62.
 59. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 695, 899.
 60. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 272.
 61. Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 252; Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun*, 193, 194.
 62. "Visitas y procesos," 333, 394; Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun*, 193.
 63. For toads, see Brosseder, *Power of Huacas*, 215, 218.
 64. *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 56–57.
 65. "Visitas y procesos," 202, 206.
 66. Guaman Poma reported how Indigenous Andean specialists accused of witchcraft extracted snake venom in order to poison enemies, or burned snakes (or their fat) in offerings to Andean deities. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 275, 278.
 67. "Visitas y procesos," 221, 225.
 68. Mills, *Idolatry and Its Enemies*, 132.
 69. Douglas, "Animals in Lele," 47.

70. Silverblatt, "Political Memories," 189.
71. Brosseder, *Power of Huacas*, 220.
72. "Visitas y procesos," 357.
73. "Visitas y procesos," 233. Guaman Poma explained how Indigenous Andeans believed that if a bat, butterfly, or snake entered a house, death was to follow. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 282.
74. "Visitas y procesos," 271, 276, 305.
75. De la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 22.
76. Dean, *Inka Bodies*, 147; Rowe, "Colonial Portraits," 263, 267; Pillsbury, "Inca-Colonial Tunics," 166.
77. Lizárraga Ibáñez, "Del *Amaru* al Dragón," 77.
78. Dean, *Inka Bodies*, 100; Lizárraga Ibáñez, "Del *Amaru* al Dragón," 77.
79. Rowe, "Colonial Portraits," 263.
80. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 50. Described as distinct from the snake or the serpent, the *amaru* existed along with the ancestors of Guaman Poma's early seventeenth-century Indigenous Andean contemporaries. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 65.
81. Benson, *Worlds of the Moche*, 67. Guaman Poma also describes the snake ancestor of an Aymara community. See Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 74.
82. *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 63; Allen, "Incas Have Gone," 193.
83. Bunker, *Snake with Golden Braids*, 95, 96, 102.
84. Estenssoro, "Plástica colonial," 429; Gisbert, "*Amaru* in the Iconography," 231.
85. Gisbert, "*Amaru* in the Iconography," 229, 231.
86. Campbell, "Ideology and Factionalism," 118; Gisbert, "*Amaru* in the Iconography," 229; Estenssoro, "Plástica colonial," 420, 428.
87. "Visitas y procesos," 305.
88. Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun*, 193–94.
89. Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, Leg. 1, Exp. 12, as cited in Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun*, 192.
90. *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 93.
91. Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun*, 192.
92. "Visitas y procesos," 356.
93. "Visitas y procesos," 356.
94. *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 93.
95. "Visitas y procesos," 356.
96. *Huarochiri Manuscript*, 93.
97. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 695.
98. Guaman Poma, "Nueva corónica," 899.
99. Gisbert, "*Amaru* in the Iconography," 221; Lizárraga Ibáñez, "Del *Amaru* al Dragón," 75.
100. "Visitas y procesos," 232; Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun*, 191.
101. Allen, "Incas Have Gone," 196, 197, 199.
102. "Visitas y procesos," 233, 234.
103. Armstrong, "Postcolonial Animal," 414.
104. Campbell, "Ideology and Factionalism," 118.
105. Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 99, 105.
106. Allen, "Incas Have Gone," 192, 193.
107. Bakewell, *Miners of the Red Mountain*, 49; Mangan, *Trading Roles*, 179.
108. Cohen Suarez, *Heaven, Hell*, 137; De la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 125; Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples*, 117–18.

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ANIMALS AND RACE

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