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The Catechism through Andean Eyes: Reflections on Post-Tridentine Reform in Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios reales*

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Abstract: The depiction of Andean religion in the *Comentarios reales de los incas* (1609, 1617) has centered on Garcilaso de la Vega's providential interpretation of Inca pagan governance and the influence of the Christian humanist traditions that he mastered as an adult in Spain. However, scholars have not adequately recognized his attention to the ecclesiastical debates regarding the persistence of Inca cult beliefs and practices in the colonial Andean society of his day. This paper examines a new source for understanding the chronicler's portrayal of Inca religion, the catechisms and canon decrees of South America's definitive post-Tridentine assembly, the Third Provincial Council of Lima (1582–1583), which established the Church's official stance on the fundamental "idolatry" of Inca morality and ritual customs and the need for their extirpation. It will be argued that Garcilaso's knowledge of natural and canon law provided the basis for his defense of the Incas' religion and justice system and his criticisms of the anti-Inca tenor of the council's directives on Andean custom and intercultural dialogue. The chronicler's response to the council's pronouncements on the ritual of penance, in particular, offers novel insights about the indigenous reception of the Church's missionary regime within an orthodox and culturally-integrated vision for Andean Christianity.

Keywords: Catholic Church-Peru-history; Incas-religion; Peru-historiography; canon law



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One of the most famous chapters of the *Comentarios reales de los incas*, by the half-Inca chronicler Garcilaso de la Vega, recounts the Spanish invaders' first attempt to teach Christianity to the ruler of the Tawantinsuyu empire. Reflecting years later on the failed diplomatic embassy of 1532, Garcilaso ([1609–1617] 1960, vol. 3, pp. 47–50) places blame for the violence that ensued on the poor communication between the friar Vicente de Valverde and the Inca Atahualpa, which allowed the conquerors to misconstrue the Andeans' religion as inferior and justify the Inca bloodshed. Without discounting the Spaniards' treachery, he laments that if only a proper Quechua for religious dialogue had existed then, the two sides would have come to realize the many religious beliefs they held in common. To make the point, Garcilaso references his personal copy of the *Confessionario para los curas de indios* (1585)—the Lima Church's "pious and charitable" confession manual in the Quechua and Aymara languages, which he had received as a gift from his childhood classmate and fellow Cuzco native, the mestizo priest Diego de Alcobaza, after its publication by the Third Provincial Council of Lima (1582–1583). In Garcilaso's view, the confession manual presented an ideal Quechua standard for Christian instruction that the interlocutors at Cajamarca had regrettably never known.

Linguists have identified the confessional text as an important basis of Garcilaso's Quechua orthography, lexical hermeneutics, and praise for the Church's adapted Cuzco variant.¹ But the chronicler's engagement with the guide's assertions about Inca religion and what they reveal about the Lima Church's post-Tridentine missionary regime has not yet been examined. The son of a Spanish conquistador and Inca noblewoman, writing in exile from Spain at the turn of the sixteenth century, Garcilaso studied a vast body of contemporary works on ecclesiastical doctrine and Inca history, ranging from Francisco de Vitoria's *Summa sacramentorum ecclesiae* (1560) to José de Acosta's *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590) (Durand 1948). Still, the *Confessionario* would have been Garcilaso's most direct source on the Lima Church's interpretation of Tridentine law and reform for the

Andean missionary context. Attention to the chronicler's appraisal of its contents uncovers a rare indigenous perspective on the Lima Church's canonical norms regarding traditional Andean custom and its controversial role in the sacramental and liturgical fora.

Studies of the *Comentarios reales* rarely attend to the treatment of church legislation, despite canon law being a central topic of intellectual debate in Spain and its overseas possessions (cf., [Cárdenas Bunsen 2018](#); [Guerrero Ayala 2018](#)). In general, while historical research on Spanish law focuses increasingly on diocesan church pronouncements, the relationship between canon law and the New World's indigenous populations remains poorly understood, including for the period following the influential Tridentine reform (see [Duve 2011](#); [Traslosheros 2016](#)). The Council of Trent (1545–1563) issued comprehensive decrees for the Roman Catholic Church and made concerted efforts to ensure the uniformity of doctrine and liturgy in Europe and across the globe. However, the commonplace story about Trent's unbending and all-powerful orthodoxy is largely exaggerated. The council's goals were narrower (discipline bishops and priests, dispute Protestant confessions), and its achievements were mixed. Nor did it forbid vernacular religious traditions as long as they were consistent with canon law. Instead, local diocesan authorities were empowered to create normative legislation based on the central regulations that would best respond to the needs and conditions of their constituents. The crucial question for the bishops in the colonial Indies was how the Tridentine canons and pastoral guidelines should be adapted to pre-existing indigenous traditions and social realities.

Confession's importance to the Tridentine councilors cannot be overstated, given the Lutheran attacks against the efficacy of the sacraments and the mediating authority of Catholic priests. The Roman Catechism (1566), which integrated the council's doctrines on confession and penance, maintained that everything that was holy and pious in the Church came through the sacred rite of reconciliation ([Goering 2004](#), p. 227). Tridentine norms were filtered down to members of the Church through diocesan canons, liturgy and feast celebrations, and local institutions ranging from religious confraternities to municipal government councils. Pastoral guides in vernacular languages also played a major role in the creation and dissemination of the doctrinal reform. Like other confession manuals of its kind, the *Confessionario* presents standard instructions for priests on how best to conduct the sacrament in conformity with the canonical principles. Yet it also expresses legal and political concerns about the persistence of traditional indigenous confessional practices in Andean Catholic devotions. The information that it purports on indigenous ideas and uses of confession opens a path by which to examine Garcilaso's disagreement with the Lima Church's interpretation of local custom in its pastoral and legal corpus.

The chronicler does not intervene overtly on church law and policy but between the lines of his discussions of native confession and Inca justice. It is well established that Garcilaso borrowed Eusebius of Caesaria's (c. 313) doctrine of *praeparatio evangelica* to affirm the Incas' divine role in preparing Andean pagans for the gospel ([Brading 1986](#), p. 21; [Zamora 1988](#), pp. 114, 182 n. 48). His education in Renaissance humanism, along with the Inca oral histories that he learned as a child from his maternal relatives, provided a guiding framework for his description of the ancient rulers' just values and polity. But far less recognized is the contemporary legal-canonical subtext at the heart of his treatment of Inca moral philosophy and religious institutions. Viewing the *Confessionario* as not merely a linguistic document but also a window on ecclesiastical law and polemic allows us to evaluate Garcilaso's critical views of the Lima assembly and how they informed his portrayal of both Inca justice and Spanish law. On the theme of confession, in particular, the *Comentarios reales* raises important questions about the colonial Church's subjugation of conquered groups and its use of canon law to shape intercultural religious dialogue.

In his defense of Inca values, Garcilaso's object of attack was not necessarily the abuses of the Spanish conquest per se but the imperial policies toward native peoples that were later instituted by King Philip II (1556–1598) and his overseas ministers (see [Brading 1986](#); [Fuerst 2018](#)). Reading his chronicle through the lens of the *Confessionario* provides added perspective on the debates regarding the Indians' status in the ecclesiastical sphere as well.

The following discussion will locate the confession manual within the broader deliberations that consumed late sixteenth-century canonists on how best to incorporate native Andean subjects into the body of the Spanish monarchy and Roman Catholic Church. It will show that the privileges that canon law granted native penitents in the areas of legal protection and local custom formed the basis of Garcilaso's response.

1. Law in the Confessional

The Third Council issued the statutes for diocesan jurisdictions in nearly all of western South America, from present-day Colombia to Chile and parts of Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina in between. It also enlisted the Jesuit Acosta to supervise the production of an official catechism, confession manual, and sermonary in Spanish and the lingua francas of Quechua and Aymara for the dissemination of Christian law and dogma in local native communities (Lima III, actio 2, chp. 3, in [Vargas Ugarte 1951](#), vol. 1, p. 266). Although Garcilaso references only the *Confessionario* in his work, the complete trilogy of the council must have been known to him. The synod's renown, particularly among Garcilaso's associates at the Jesuit college of his adopted home of Córdoba, and the authoritative reach of its pronouncements on Peru's native languages and religious traditions would have compelled him to take a stance on the manual's assertions and proposals.

The *Confessionario* was first and foremost an aid for the proper administration of the sacrament. But like other confession manuals, it fit within a larger body of "canonical-pastoral literature" that contained more than just norms for ritual activity ([Dellaferrera 2004](#); [Lira 2006](#)). The presence of legal codes in pastoral literature was nothing new; summae and confession manuals dating back to the fourth Lateran Council (1215) brought Roman and canon law to bear on cases of conscience and communicated legal principles to priests and the wider lay population. From its medieval origin as a sacrament forward, confession played a key role in the promotion and execution of the Church's legal authority, which operated in two interrelated spheres: the forum internum (the internal forum of conscience and penance) and the forum externum (the external forum of the ecclesiastical court) ([Goering 2004](#), pp. 175–76). The Council of Trent (Trent, session 14, chp. 5, 7, and canon 9, in [Council of Trent \[1545–1563\] 1978](#), pp. 92–94, 96, 103) further codified the judicial character of the two fora, conferring on priests the power to act as "judges" of lawbreaking "defendants", with the goal to restrain moral vice, promote goodness in Christian society, and guarantee the stability of the political order. Beyond the ecclesiastical sphere, sacramental confession also reinforced the faithful's compliance with the temporal laws of the state. Confessors took on the responsibility of convincing penitents to obey the supreme authority of the Crown and secular powers by linking their public obedience to civil law to the granting of spiritual pardon and the preservation of conscience (Trent, session 14, chp. 7, in [Council of Trent \[1545–1563\] 1978](#), p. 96).²

Legal principles and obligations can be found in each of the *Confessionario*'s various parts: the scripted questionnaire for examining penitents, the partial reproduction of the Lima canon decrees of 1567–1568, and three supplements on native Andean beliefs and practices. The most significant of the latter is the Spanish jurist Polo Ondegardo's *Tratado y averiguación de los errores y supersticiones de los indios* (c. 1559), an important but forgotten source for Garcilaso's reflection on Spanish policies concerning Inca religion.³ Written at the behest of Viceroy Andrés Hurtado de Mendoza and Archbishop Jerónimo de Loayza, Licentiate Ondegardo's report was among the first to identify the solar religion as a crucial component of Inca power ([MacCormack 1991](#), p. 362) and became a standard source on indigenous ritual beliefs and practices for later missionary chroniclers and magistrates of the Church's extirpation-of-idolatries campaigns ([Duviols 1977](#), pp. 116–17; [García Miranda 2011](#), p. 83). The *Confessionario*'s preface states that Ondegardo's treatise would equip priests—and, tellingly, jurists—with the information they needed to confront "elder Indians, hechiceros [sorcerors], or the like", above and beyond its utility for confessing Indians in general ([Third Lima Council \[1585\] 1985](#), p. 201). Priests would hence be able to identify and dissuade penitents against heterodox ideas and customs or, in cases of extreme reticence, refer them to the ecclesiastical magistrates for inquest and potential trial.

The post-Tridentine handbooks introduced universal formats and strategies to achieve rigorous doctrinal and legal compliance. For example, the new manuals arranged model questions for penitents by order of the Ten Commandments. The *Confessionario*'s commandment-based interrogation features questions that any European penitent would hear: Have you used the name of God in vain? (for the second commandment), Have you skipped Mass on Sundays or holy feast days? (for the third), Are you in the habit of stealing? (for the seventh), etc. Yet it also tailors the examination to "sins" from the Andean past, with questions about the adoration of *huacas* (sacred objects and places) and *malquis* (embalmed ancestors), ritual drinking ceremonies, and the belief in prophetic dreams. A question designed specifically for the "hechiceros confesores" (sorcerer-confessors) who officiated traditional Andean penitential rites poses a question that reflects the Lima councilors' outright dismissal of pre-Christian devotional principles: "Have you tried to keep the Indians from learning the Christian doctrine or following God's law, persuading them instead to be like their ancestors?" (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 234). The *Confessionario*'s formulaic queries demanded that Andean penitents renounce their ancestral beliefs and loyalties in favor of a reborn colonial subjectivity (see Harrison 2014, p. 20), tightly bound to the authority of doctrinal norms and scriptural law.

Acosta's guide to the new missionary regime, *De procuranda indorum salute* (1588), maintains that the "permissiveness" of Andean evangelization's first decades required sacramental remedies but also the juridical instruments of royal and church law: "The situation demands, and the authority of the Church thus establishes, that those who have taken the step towards Christianity must be placed under the authority of princes and Christian magistrates" (Acosta [1588] 1984–1987, vol. 1, pp. 64–67).⁴ With the same designs, the Third Council implemented Trent's acknowledgment of the privileges and practical necessity of the Patronato Regio (see Trent, session 25, chp. 20, in Council of Trent [1545–1563] 1978, pp. 251–52), which, to strengthen the efforts of evangelization, established the Crown's control over church appointments and revenues and the legal collaboration between the Church and Viceroy Francisco de Toledo's secular administration (1569–1581). In corresponding fashion, Philip II accepted the Tridentine decrees as universal law throughout the monarchy (Durán 1982, pp. 67–68). In the vision of Acosta and the Lima high clergy, the dual and mutually-reinforcing domains of ecclesiastical and civil justice would render Christians accountable to both the Church and the colonial state. It was a legal framework that marked a departure from the philosophy of the First (1551–1552) and Second Lima Councils (1567–1568), which had afforded parish priests greater local autonomy in adjusting Andean concepts and customs to the universal canons of the Church.

2. The Third Lima Council: A Silent Presence

The inattention to Lima canon law in the *Comentarios reales* is understandable given Garcilaso's failure to address the Third Council in any direct way, apart from his tribute to its Quechua-language standard. With few exceptions, the chronicle makes no reference to the council's episcopal governance, even though news of the historic assembly and the many controversies surrounding its deliberations undoubtedly reached Garcilaso and his Jesuit interlocutors in Spain.⁵ The only Third Council prelate mentioned by name was the Franciscan bishop of La Imperial, Chile, Antonio de San Miguel (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 264–65; vol. 4, pp. 155–56, 159), but in the context of his early career in Cuzco, when Garcilaso knew him as his father's confessor, founder of the city's Hospital de Indios, and devoted advocate of protections and restitution for the indigenous peoples harmed by Spanish conquest. Not even Archbishop Toribio de Mogrovejo—hailed as the "Borromeo of the Andes" (Durán 1990, p. 260) for his leadership in adapting the Tridentine canons—receives the chronicler's mention. Another major actor, the mestizo Jesuit Blas Valera, served on the council's Quechua and Aymara translation committee (Bartra 1967, pp. 365–66) and was Garcilaso's most revered source on Inca government and religion. Valera's contributions to the council and its publications also go unrecognized.

Licentiate Ondegardo, who died before the council's inception, surfaces throughout Part Two of the chronicle as captain in Peru's civil wars on behalf of the Crown. Allusions to his *Tratado y averiguación* and other prominent reports on Inca law, religion, and government, however, do not. Throughout the chronicle, Garcilaso follows the Ciceronian principle of rhetorical *decorum*, well established in Renaissance histories, by which the style of address, to be effective, should be amenable to the writer's subject, circumstances, and audience (Struever 1970, p. 67; see Fuerst 2018, pp. 52–59). The chronicler openly praises historical actors and sources when they favor his arguments, while communicating his disagreements with them discreetly when they do not. Garcilaso ([1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 189–91) recounts that in 1560, before leaving for Spain at the age of twenty-one, he visited Ondegardo at his home in Cuzco, where he saw five embalmed bodies of his Inca ancestors that the *corregidor* had excavated for his research on Peruvian antiquities. Neither this passage nor any other directly references Ondegardo's claims about the Incas' polity or religion, be they admiring (regard for the rulers' feast calendar, spiritual topography, and cult hierarchies) or critical (allegations against their practices of cannibalism, ritual suicide, and sodomy). In a rare exception, Garcilaso contests the judge's assertions about the custom of human sacrifice but uses the words of Valera to do so: "In reverence [of the sun deity], the [Incas] performed great sacrifices of sheep and other animals but never of men, as Polo and others who cited him falsely affirmed" (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 57). His refusal to engage Ondegardo's work more bluntly almost certainly obeyed political considerations as much as rhetorical ones, given the jurist's sizable influence in favor of a legal cause that he and Garcilaso shared: the perpetuity of the *encomienda* (indigenous corvée labor system), from which Garcilaso, as the son of a Spanish conquistador, aspired to secure an inheritance (see Hampe Martínez 1999, pp. 508–13).

We can be assured, nonetheless, that Garcilaso kept abreast of the missionary challenges in his native land well after resettling in Andalusia. It was in southern Spain—most likely in the libraries of his father's relatives, the Marquises of Priego, and of their beneficiaries, the Jesuits of the College of Córdoba—where he cultivated his knowledge of church history and politics, along with the learned traditions of philology, historical gloss, and antiquarianism (see Fuerst 2018, pp. 24–26; Mora 2010). In addition to the *Confessionario*, Garcilaso mentions receiving direct reports from Peru on the South American missions, including two letters from Father Alcobaza: one contained Alcobaza's description of the pre-Inca ruins of Tiwanaku near Lake Titicaca and the other his account from Chile on the extreme violence of the Spanish-Araucanian war (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 86–87, 282).⁶ Moreover, Garcilaso's close ties to the Jesuits gave him access to the order's correspondence and the 1602 *carta anual* of the Peruvian province (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 282); Valera's (since-lost) history of the Incas, *Historia Occidentalis*; and Acosta's celebrated *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (see Miró Quesada S. 1968; Mora 2010). The Cordoban circle would surely have recognized Acosta as secretary of the Third Council and editor of its decrees and catechisms, and the mestizo Jesuits Valera and Bartolomé de Santiago as two of the translators of the council's pastoral complements into indigenous languages (Bartra 1967, pp. 363–67; Durán 1982, p. 215). As further indication of his interest in overseas mission, Garcilaso ([1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 49; vol. 3, p. 227; and vol. 4, pp. 124–25) cites his audiences in Spain with distinguished veterans of Indian evangelization, not least of whom were Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas, the Quechua linguist Domingo de Santo Tomás, and the Peruvian polyglot Luis Jerónimo de Oré.⁷

3. The Third Lima Council and Indigenous Custom

Garcilaso conveys an unmistakably orthodox vision of Andean evangelization. His chronicle presents the spiritual improvement and salvation of indigenous peoples as the foundational legitimacy of Spanish possession, celebrates Peru's Jesuit missionary leadership, and echoes the Lima Church's demand for clerical reform, through higher doctrinal and linguistic standards, to ameliorate the slow pace of indigenous conversions. Garcilaso also makes use of Jesuit sources to repudiate the Andeans' demonic "perversions"

of Christianity and approvingly cites the *Confessionario*'s judgment on native superstitions involving the human senses (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 4, p. 109). The Jesuit order extended the confession sacrament to indigenous peoples on a massive scale; to Garcilaso's certain endorsement, the Jesuits championed the Tridentine principle that the sacrament was vital to the religious life of new converts and indispensable for their salvation.⁸

That being said, Garcilaso must have found the Third Council's blanket rejection of Andean spirituality deeply offensive. The preface of the *Confessionario* denounces the demonically-induced superstition, error, and deception that afflicted "all the Indians" of Peru and describes the Church's Andean territories as a "dense scrubland" that had to be "dismantled and broken" before the sowing of Christianity might properly begin (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 199–200). The strident appraisal establishes a through line connecting the volume's various parts: the model questionnaire for confessions; the chapter of exhortations against drunkenness, incest, idolatries, and cohabitation; the "Instrucción contra las ceremonias y ritos que usan los Indios"; the reprint of the Second Council's constitutions on "irrational" Andean ceremonies and beliefs (see Lima II, indios, const. 98–105, in Vargas Ugarte 1951, vol. 1, pp. 205–10); and, most notably, Ondegardo's *Tratado y averiguación*.⁹ As the confession manual's preface explains, the ethnographic supplements were intended to help priests discern the "baseless delusions" of their parishioners, persuade them to accept "the truth that they must believe", and bring them to "genuine repentance and remedy of their offenses" (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 200, 202).

The wholesale dismissal of indigenous religiosity would appear to contradict much of the *De procuranda*'s guidance to evangelize on Andean terms. Acosta's ([1588] 1984–1987, vol. 1, pp. 588–91) treatise affirms the Church's long-held doctrine of flexibility and tolerance toward vernacular laws and "usos y costumbres"—pre-existing song, dance, public feasts, and the like—drawing on Saint Gregory the Great's (c. 600) advice for the clergy to respect customary practices of "natural virtue" in the process of converting pagan Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. Likewise, missionary priests in the Andes were counseled to admit, with paternal charity and discretion, the continuation of local customs in liturgical contexts, provided that they did not contradict the Christian religion and were directed to the honor of God.¹⁰ In the indigenous domain of the strictly spiritual or supernatural, however, Acosta eschews the appeal for cultural accommodation and opts instead for clear divisions and theological certainty, tracing the source of native religious ideas and expression to diabolical agency and the sin of idolatry (see Cervantes 1994, pp. 26–29).

Consider, for example, *De procuranda*'s tripartite classification of the world's so-called barbarian cultures. In this ethnological schema, the Incas (and the Mexica of North America) occupied the intermediate second category of barbarians. Above the Incas were the superior Far East Asian civilizations of stable and lettered government, and below them, the lawless and savage multitudes, who populated all regions of the planet and the greater part of the Indies. According to Acosta ([1588] 1984–1987, vol. 1, pp. 64–67), the rulers of Tawantinsuyu had developed a noteworthy political and ceremonial culture with many aspects that were not contrary to God's teachings, but their allowance of customs that defied divine reason had produced "monstrous" deviations incompatible with natural law. In the Jesuit's reasoning, it followed that the Incas' surviving beliefs and practices required tighter clerical vigilance at the local parish level and additional correction by the higher laws of church and state. It is not surprising, given Acosta's insistence on judicial oversight, that the authors of the *Confessionario* emphasize the manual's special utility for "visitadores y jueces de indios", whose work was to identify and correct idolatries by means of the colonial legal system (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 201).

Although Garcilaso admires the "maestro padre Acosta" for his views on the Incas' intelligence and achievements, he disagrees strongly (if not explicitly) with his allegations against their aberrations in the areas of culture and religion. Notable studies have carefully reconstructed the implicit variance between the *Comentarios reales* and Acosta's natural and moral history on the value of Inca religion (see, e.g., Duviols 1977, pp. 78–81; Zamora 1988, pp. 117–19). Yet the Third Council's confession manual, whose ethnographic

contents were marked by Acosta's involvement, was also a key component of the Peruvian chronicler's intertextual response. The *Confessionario* takes on further importance for capturing Garcilaso's disagreements with Acosta when we consider that Ondegardo's *Tratado y averiguación* furnished the sum and substance of the Jesuit's treatment of Andean "idolatries" in book five of his historical work (Duviols 1977, p. 117). Acosta—one of the unnamed authorities "who", according to Garcilaso, "cited [Ondegardo] falsely" (on human sacrifice and other topics)—repeated the licentiate's call to extirpate the remainders of Inca shrines, superstition, and observance, deeming any integration of prior religious thinking and customs unacceptable for Andean missionary activity. In the end, Ondegardo, Acosta, and the Lima councilors failed to draw distinctions, crucial to Garcilaso ([1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 19, 47, 54), between Peru's epoch of barbarism and idolatries and the ensuing Inca period of monotheism, just government, and moral correction. Indeed, Garcilaso's two-part chronology of ancient times is the very basis of his natural law argument of Inca vindication, which makes every effort to distance the imperial rulers from the Spanish accusations regarding the tyranny, human sacrifice, cannibalism, and other violations of divine reason that supposedly prevailed in traditional Andean society.¹¹

4. Confession and Legal Protection

When European missionaries first encountered indigenous rituals, they often remarked on the perceived correlations between them and the sacraments. For example, to remedy illness or misfortune, native Andeans would perform offerings and divinatory rites followed by acts of contrition and purification reminiscent of Catholic penance (Estenssoro Fuchs 2003, pp. 208–9). Some priests attributed the quasi-Christian acts to independent indigenous knowledge acquired by natural reason, while others speculated that a pre-Hispanic apostolate may have once introduced the confession sacrament, which, over time and frail memory, had fallen into decay. By the time of the Third Council, however, demonology provided the canonical explanation for the parallels: The devil and his acolytes—the so-called "hechiceros confesores"—conspired to emulate the sacrament at the expense of Andean parishioners (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 233, 276). Aristotelian naturalism no longer justified the Christian-like phenomena of the pagan world; in the post-Tridentine period, the cross-cultural similarities came to be understood as parodic distortions, fueled by demonic agency, that counteracted the work of God (Cervantes 1994, pp. 23–24). Lima church authorities described the hechiceros—and, to a significant degree, their Inca sponsors—as responsible for keeping the old practices alive.

On the authority of Ondegardo, the Third Council confessionary asserts the pre-Hispanic origin of Andean penance customs and devotes outsized attention to the methods of the indigenous ritual specialists, whom the licentiate labels variably as "hechiceros", "confesores", and "ychuris" (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 265–83). The licentiate claims that in colonial times, some traditional confessors had turned clandestine while others maintained the rituals openly, "[using] their office of sorcery with the appearance of Christianity" (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 282). He continues that every sector of society—men, women, rich, poor, even Spanish Christians—sought out their "fake words" and curative powers, as if the hechiceros acted with a ceremonial authority equal to that of Catholic priests (Duviols 1977, p. 119; Estenssoro Fuchs 2003, pp. 201–3).¹² According to the "Instrucción contra las ceremonias y ritos", native confessors not only used Christian methods to acquire false legitimacy but also intervened ritually in lawsuits and business dealings between Spaniards, *curacas* (native Andean lords), and common Indians (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 254).¹³

Above all else, Ondegardo spotlights the colonizers' legal requirement to protect the innocent from abuse. The hechiceros preyed especially on the poor, aged, and infirm, extorting payments for rituals in the form of clothing, food, and silver (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 274). As a jurist, Ondegardo knew well the obligation to guarantee *amparo* (legal protection) for the Crown's weakest and most vulnerable subjects. His treatise blames the regard for the confessional practices not solely on the hechiceros' alleged talent for

fraud but also on the laxity and incompetence of ecclesiastical justice: “And many of these sorcerers are held in good repute and not taken for sorcerers... because ecclesiastical judges have either given them express permission [to conduct rituals] or allowed them to happen without discerning the evil that can occur” (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 283). The corregidor implicates the Inca authorities of colonial times as well: “the rich and powerful (like the Incas, caciques, and curacas) knew and still know more about these [rituals], for they were the ones who sponsored them and preached and ordered that they be carried out” (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 279). Ondegardo’s objective was to retake control of a ritual practice that, in the absence of legal surveillance, had been commandeered by native ministers. At issue were both the clergy’s claim to exclusive spiritual authority and the spiritual and economic protection of defenseless Andeans.¹⁴

Canon law guaranteed the Church’s members protections against injustice—a doctrine that found its most forceful expression in the classification of Amerindians as “indios miserables” and therefore worthy of special charity and privileges. Originating in Constantinian civil and canon law, the legal category defined Indians as materially and spiritually impoverished, susceptible to vice and exploitation, and therefore incapable of self-governance or defense (Duve 2011, p. 32). Lima church legislation first invoked the term in the statutes of the Second and Third Councils (Lima II, españoles, const. 120, and Lima III, actio 3, chp. 3, in Vargas Ugarte 1951, vol. 1, pp. 152–53, 284–85; see Castañeda Delgado 1971, pp. 284–85; Guerrero Ayala 2018, p. 151), which had enduring influence on Peru’s subsequent civil and ecclesiastical codes.¹⁵ It is thus no coincidence that the legal category is referenced throughout Acosta’s *De procuranda*. Acosta ([1588] 1984–1987, vol. 1, pp. 146–47, 152–53, 192–93, 372–73) brings the category’s force to bear when denouncing the cruelty of Spain’s wars and encomienda system, which under the pretext of spreading Christianity had plundered the labor and resources of the defenseless “miserables”. Spanish invaders who mistreated native innocents acted in mortal sin, Acosta states, and divine consequences would befall royal and church authorities should the ongoing conditions of legal impunity not be overcome (see also Peña Montenegro 1668, p. 144).

The legal term also underpins Acosta’s calls for the administration of penance in accordance with canon law. “Due to clerical ignorance [of the vernacular language]”, he warns, “the miserable Indians may be utterly deprived of the most necessary medicine [i.e., confession] and, being weak and prone to error, they will run the risk of condemnation” (Acosta [1588] 1984–1987, vol. 2, pp. 54–55; see also vol. 2, pp. 406–7, 424–45). Similar concerns for the defense of indigenous penitents extended to his admonitions against the ministers of traditional confessions, who “teach many other impious and sacrilegious things to these miserables [*miseri*], who heed their false promises, being fearful by nature and unprepared to recognize the devil’s deceptions, under the appeal of ancient customs and fear of the danger of death” (Acosta [1588] 1984–1987, vol. 2, p. 448–49). As Acosta ([1588] 1984–1987, vol. 2, pp. 214–15, 230–31, 248–49) repeatedly reminds Peru’s missionary clergy, the Indians’ “miserable” status rendered them captive to demonic manipulations and in extra need of legal protection. Behind the Jesuit’s argument lies also the fear, shared by Ondegardo, of the Church’s inability to exercise control over the indigenous peoples’ ritual life and over the native religious specialists from whom they sought assistance.

5. The Incas’ Religious “Canon”

Garcilaso’s argument of Inca legitimation tacitly validates the Lima canons’ insistence on indigenous legal protections. In the opening pages of the *Comentarios reales*, we read that Andeans of the “first age” lived in a state of abjection, incivility, and violence, under the yoke of idolatry and bereft of spiritual tutelage. The groups of the time that seized power did so by force and “treated the vassals with tyranny and cruelty, using them as slaves” (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 22; cited in Guerrero Ayala 2018, p. 154). In Garcilaso’s rendering, common Indians were, in effect, “miserables” *avant la lettre*, deprived by lawless tyrants of the freedom and spiritual protections of civil government. It was not until the Incas’ providential rise that the Andeans became “capable of reason” and “more docile to

receive the Catholic faith” (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, p. 25). By the light of natural reason, the Inca kings grasped the existence of one God (Pachacamac), spread the divine message to their benighted subjects, and over time eliminated the customs contrary to nature. Their government produced a rationally ordered and beneficent society whose principal focus was the protection and well-being of the poor. Garcilaso’s Incas approximated the Lascasian ideal of what Christian governance should be (Aranibar 1991, p. 701), in marked contrast to Spanish colonial rule, which had been negligent in its responsibility to safeguard the protection of indigenous peoples (see Guerrero Ayala 2018, pp. 155–56).

A key insight by José Cárdenas Bunsen (2018, pp. 17–18) shows that Garcilaso implicitly endows Manco Capac’s foundational teachings with the core tenets of canon legislation, which grounded its authority on natural law.¹⁶ According to Cárdenas Bunsen, the fundamental ties between natural law and the church canons allowed Garcilaso to claim that the Incas “had things in their laws and ordinances so close to natural law that they could be compared to the commandments of our holy law and the works of mercy” (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 45).¹⁷ In the chronicler’s telling, the first Inca Manco Capac established commandments “true to natural law and reason”: laws and penalties to prevent public crimes (adultery, homicide, and theft), monogamy and marriage within kin groups, laws of obedience to the curacas, and the rights of the poor and needy to adequate sustenance and land (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 33–34). Garcilaso goes on to quote Blas Valera at length on the admirable “leyes y ordenanzas morales” of subsequent rulers, which anticipated Christian virtues. These included an “agrarian law” for equitable land distribution, a “common law” for organizing public works, a “law of brotherhood” for collective assistance in the harvest and building houses, a “domestic law” to prevent idleness, and many others (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 161–63). From its inception, the Inca legislation underscored special protections for the disadvantaged—the blind, elderly, infirm, poor, invalid, etc.—that matched the privileges in the Spanish legal code for the Crown’s “miserable” subjects dating to Alfonso X’s *Siete partidas* (1256–1265).¹⁸

The Incas, like the rulers of many ancient societies, harnessed moral dogma for political agendas (D’Altroy 2015, p. 247). First in a line of divine kings, Manco Capac mediated with the supernatural and introduced ritual beliefs and practices to reinforce Inca ideology and legitimacy. As per Garcilaso ([1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 33–34, 55), the Inca ruler consecrated the “divine cult” of the sun deity at Cuzco’s Coricancha temple and mandated sacrifices to the sun throughout the realm. In time, his royal descendants established a priestly hierarchy and canon of ritual, which taught and spread the solar religion and disrupted the claims to power of rival ethnic groups. The close relatives of hereditary curacas served as ministers of the regional temples, and in each province, “high priests or bishops” of the Inca bloodline were assigned to turn common Andeans away “from the lowness and depravity of their many gods” (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 41). Although Garcilaso ([1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 115) acknowledges the persistence of demonic influence in the Incas’ oracular divinations and sacrifices, Garcilaso ([1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 38) draws a clear dividing line separating the temple priests of divinely-inspired religious teaching from the regional hechiceros who sustained the devil’s falsehoods.

In narrating the cult’s expansion, Garcilaso mostly passes over the historical conflicts between imperial and local rites and the complex multidirectional flow of sacred ideas and objects from Cuzco to conquered territories and back (cf., Ondegardo, in Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 283). On the contrary, the Incas, in his account, disseminated their religion in an orderly, progressive, and unremitting fashion, without “disdaining or tyrannizing” local authorities. At the empire’s height, the Inca Pachacuti continued to issue laws and “fueros” (privileges) that allowed the provinces to follow their own codes and customs—“everything that was not opposed to natural law”—on the condition that they did not conflict with the religion and laws of the state (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 208–9; see also vol. 2, pp. 162–64).¹⁹ Based on the *Comentarios reales*, little would

separate the Inca Pachacuti's policies from Saint Gregory's pronouncements on customary tradition or, for that matter, the Council of Trent's determinations on the pivotal importance of episcopal and clerical authority for the implementation of devotional uniformity.

6. Inca Law and Native Confessions

Garcilaso, citing Valera, acknowledges the survival of demonic ceremonies from heathen times, which included the "oral confession for the cleansing of crimes that was used in a region [of the Indies]" (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 51).²⁰ Valera states that Satan advanced the false rites to raise his honor and esteem in the eyes of the "miserable" Indians—an epithet with clear legal, and not merely descriptive, value in the context of contemporary missionary discourse. At the same time, Garcilaso (through Valera) calls into question the ties that the Church established between the diabolical ritual and Inca religious practices. For instance, Garcilaso references a history of vocal confessions for an unspecified region of the Indies while making no claim for the Andes region explicitly labeled as such. In addition, he expounds the meaning of the Quechua term "ychu" (cereal grass), which Ondegardo's treatise (and the *Confessionario's* Aymara text) had applied to the "ychuris" who handled cereal grass when evaluating the truthfulness of indigenous confessions (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 233–34, 268; see Harrison 2014, p. 71). In the chronicler's discussion, "ychu" had no ritual connotations; it was the tough straw that the Andeans used to cover their houses (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 105).

Garcilaso's denial of pre-Hispanic confession in the Andes serves two arguments at once: It distances the Incas from yet another rite of supposed diabolic origin while also casting doubt on the subversive role that the *Confessionario* ascribed to the Andean atonement practice. Instead, we are told, the native confession rites, where they did in fact appear, were largely an invention born of colonial interaction. According to Valera's account, the mistaken European belief in the rites' ancient origin derived from the attempts to establish religious dialogue in the confusing atmosphere of the first decades after conquest. Valera contends that the indigenous peoples told the missionary priests that they, like the Christians, had confessors to whom they confessed their sins, which in turn satisfied the priests' quest for cultural agreement: "And so, interpreting things according to the fancy of their imagination, they wrote down as true things that the Indians never dreamed of; for in the true histories they tell, no concept of our Christian religion whatsoever can be found" (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 50–51).²¹ Along similar lines, Garcilaso refutes the ritual overlap by arguing that the Andeans invented false analogies out of an innate civility and respect toward the newcomers, to "adulate the Spaniards and win their affection" (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 48, 61; Estenssoro Fuchs 2003, p. 208).²²

The Third Council rejected any connection between the biblical God and the gentile divinities, stating that demonic falsehood and deception pervaded all non-Christian objects of worship that were not the divine Creator Himself (Lima III, actio 2, chp. 4, in Vargas Ugarte 1951, vol. 1, p. 267). As a corollary to the Lima canon, Garcilaso denies any association between the Christian sacraments and ancestral rituals and recognizes the harmful role of diabolical simulation in traditional Andean spirituality (and in the religious expression of all cultures). But he draws on the essence of the Third Council doctrine *only* to describe the general characteristics of Indian paganism—not the cult of the Incas, whose spiritual progress and achievements he attributed at each and every stage to the overriding exercise of divine providence and natural reason. For him, any beliefs and practices incompatible with natural law, from human sacrifice to superstitious penitential rites, fell outside the sphere of Inca moral teachings. The charge that the Incas practiced a form of confession or any other distortion of the sacraments was one that he was eager to disprove.

Nevertheless, even though Garcilaso makes plain that the Incas had no knowledge of confession rites, he describes procedures of their justice system that present unavoidable similarities with the sacrament. He states that in Inca times, the witnesses in criminal cases were by nature good-tempered, acquiescent, and always inclined to speak the truth. What

is more, they knew better than to lie in the judicial setting, not only because dishonesty was punished severely but because “speaking before any judge meant speaking to the Inca himself, whom they adored as God” (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 45–46). Adopting the language of canon decree, Garcilaso ([1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 60) informs us that by “divine commandment”, it was “sacrilegious and anathema” to break the law, which included telling falsehoods to an Inca judge. The invocation of the canonical crime (sacrilege) and the canonical sanction (anathema) underscores not only the homology between civil and moral law in Garcilaso’s history of Inca justice but also the implicit correlation that the chronicler establishes between Inca legal testimony and the sacrament of confession. (Ordained confessors, we recall, also adjudicated God’s laws.)

Unlike the Spanish, the Incas, as divine kings, did not contemplate separate temporal and spiritual jurisdictions. However, the native subjects’ testimony before earthly-divine authority, in Garcilaso’s account, effectively becomes a para-liturgical equivalent of the public forum of conscience. The chronicler explains that native criminals were often so afflicted by guilt that they would voluntarily appear before the state judge to vocalize their concealed “sins”, ask God’s forgiveness, and seek remedy for their transgressions:

It often happened that the delinquents, accused by their own conscience, appeared before justice to manifest their hidden sins, for in addition to believing that their souls would be condemned, they held with great certainty that their faults and sins had brought harm to the republic, such as illnesses, deaths, bad seasons, and other collective or personal misfortunes; and they said that they wanted to appease their god with their deaths so that he would not send additional misfortune to the world on account of their sin. (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 60)²³

Considering Garcilaso’s denial of the existence of Inca penitential rites, the custom of revealing “ocultos pecados” described here seems incongruous. On one level, the delinquents’ approach to the judicial procedure—to remedy collective misfortunes, such as diseases or harvest failures, and restore divine order—matches the social and spiritual functions that Ondegardo and missionary writers ascribed to the ychuris’ traditional rites (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 268–69). At the same time, however, Garcilaso cleanses the judicial procedure of “idolatrous” or diabolical elements; he substitutes the appeasement of the huacas for that of “their god” and underscores the criminal’s self-reproach and “conscience”, in contradiction to Ondegardo and others, who denied that Andeans believed in the immortality of the soul or possessed the notion of “interior sin”. With only a few minor adjustments to the description, the Incas’ legal procedure to admit responsibility acquires the basic components of Catholic ritual thought and action: the presence of guilt, examination of conscience, concern for the soul’s damnation (or salvation), confession of sins, expression of contrition, and plea for divine reconciliation.

The indigenous confessions described by Garcilaso came freely of the lawbreakers’ own accord, without recourse to coercion. And he explains that when the facts of a case were unresolved, the Inca judges carried out methodical inquiries to probe the nature, causes, and responsibility for the offense. Take, for instance, the ritual procedure to assure the truth of legal case testimony, which bears resemblance to Spanish oath-taking before God in both the confessional and the tribunal:

When they examined a witness, no matter how serious the case, the judge asked: “Do you promise the Inca to speak the truth?” The witness would answer: “Yes, I promise”. The judge then said: “Be sure to speak frankly what you know about the case, without adding any lies or omitting any part of what happened”. The witness said again: “I promise sincerely”. Then by his promise they allowed him to say everything that he knew about the case, without interruption, . . . what he knew of both sides, whether for or against. (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 45; cf., Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 205–8)²⁴

As James Fuerst (2018, p. 198) points out, Garcilaso contrasts the fairmindedness of the Incas' methods of fact-gathering—weighing the testimonies of all sides involved—with the ethical failings of the Spaniards' approach to interrogations. Immediately after explaining how testimony in the Inca courts was rendered, Garcilaso recounts that shortly after the conquest of the Incas, there was a murder investigation near Cuzco in which a curaca was ordered to appear before a Spanish judge. In the course of the interview, the judge asked the Andean nobleman only pointed questions about the accused murderers without desiring to know anything about the mitigating circumstances or the victims who might have incited them. Not wanting his testimony to be misconstrued, the curaca protested that “if he told just one side [of the story] and silenced the other, he understood that to be lying, and he would not be able to tell the whole truth as he had promised” (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 46).²⁵ Here, Garcilaso's assessment of Spanish colonial institutions is atypically straightforward. Whereas the Inca judges kept an open mind, hoping to learn both sides of the issues before them in order to decide a case fairly, the Spanish magistrates conducted a biased exercise that precluded witnesses from reporting the complete facts.

In Garcilaso's view, the Incas' impartiality toward their subjects in the legal arena stands in contrast to the prejudicial assumptions with which Spanish colonial authorities approached the testimony of indigenous witnesses. Viceroy Toledo's first interrogations of Andean nobility, to cite one famous example, followed a highly structured format designed to establish the “facts” of Inca tyranny and the “just title” of the Spanish Crown (see Mumford 2012, pp. 100–12). Using royally sanctioned questionnaires, Spanish judges goaded witnesses to substantiate the Incas' cruel conquests, unlawful seizures of lands, and abusive tax and labor requirements. By a similar token, in the ecclesiastical sphere, the formulaic scripts of the catechisms pressed indigenous subjects to renounce Andean devotions as illegitimate and profess the truths of Christianity. As a case in point, the text of the *Confessionario* gave native penitents little choice but to concede the binding terms of the priest's examination. Of course, in the practice of the confessional, as in the Toledan inquiries, Andeans undoubtedly produced answers that complicated or even undermined the predetermined scripts in ways that hindered Spanish goals. Although indigenous perspectives on the sacrament's implementation are rare, especially given the private and oral nature of confession, we can nevertheless surmise that the force and influence of the confession manual's guidelines varied considerably from parish to parish, depending on the resolve and abilities of the clergy and parishioners alike. Be that as it may, the chronicler makes the general inference that if the indigenous peoples were granted the respect to speak more freely, whether before a judge or a priest, a better appreciation of the common values that united the Spanish authorities and their Andean subjects might be achieved.

7. Conclusions

Garcilaso, ever adherent to the Lima canons, by no means proposes the continuity between Inca ceremonials and Christian rites or the practical adaptation of Inca ritual procedures for liturgical or sacramental contexts. The Third Council was clear on the liturgy's incommensurability with the Andeans' traditional sacred activity. Rather, the chronicler's commentary on Inca moral law and justice represents a larger point about the potential of social understanding, legal accountability, and the Christian community in colonial times. He presents the tacit comparison between the just ancient empire and the ideal Christian order so that the elements of the Inca past can be properly dignified and recast within a universal Christian worldview. Like the Renaissance humanists who found Christian signs in ancient pagan wisdom, Garcilaso instructs his European readers that the Incas' natural law anticipated the advent of Peru's canon laws and Christian government. He argues that as elements born of natural reason, the pagan models could (and should) in fact subsist in the colonial present—not so much to revive or rechannel their ancient meaning and purpose but rather to serve as an edifying memory of the Incas' prophetic function and historical devotion to the one true God (see Estenssoro Fuchs 2003, p. 153).²⁶

Roman Catholic law was not a closed system that was mechanically applied from one diocese to the next. Local conditions led inevitably to disagreements among church authorities about the proper way that the canons and sacraments ought to be fulfilled. At no point does Garcilaso argue against the Church's universal claims and right to transform the religious lives of native Peruvians. Between the lines of his Inca history, Garcilaso grappled, as did Spanish churchmen, with how to identify the sacred devotions that were consistent with natural law and could therefore be maintained. But he also advised Lima's high clergy that in denying the instructive value of Inca traditions and instead seeing only their incompatibility, its priorities had been misplaced. William Christian (2006, p. 261) notes that, for Spain, the flexibility of local bishops and parish priests in the application of church law, including the Tridentine canons, found precedent in the Church's centuries-old respect for local custom. In other words, the preexisting habits of a local community had an important place in negotiating the conditions and vigor of new church laws and practices, in perpetual dialogue with the Church's centralizing principles. All of which is to say that, for Garcilaso, an Andean (and decidedly Inca) Christianity could still be possible if only there were better communication and discernment between the two sides.

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Notes

- ¹ Cerrón-Palomino (1991, p. 144) shows that Garcilaso's Quechua orthography and ideas on the translation of Christian discourse can be traced to his familiarity with the *Confessionario*. According to Cárdenas Bunsen's (2014) recent findings in the Granada church archives, Garcilaso also likely consulted the manuscript of Blas Valera's *Arte de la lengua índica*—a Quechua grammar closely aligned with the criteria of the Third Council's *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua general* (1586), which Cárdenas Bunsen confirms was drafted under Valera's supervision.
- ² In Peru, a famous example of the sacrament's ties to the outward forum can be found in the Dominican order's efforts, based on the Tridentine principle, to make the absolution of penitents (especially Spanish encomenderos) contingent on the payment of restitution to their victims (Lira 2006, pp. 1144–54; see also Lohmann Villena 1966).
- ³ The earliest publication of Ondegardo's lost manuscript, the *Tratado y averiguación*, appears in summarized format under the title "Los errores y supersticiones de los indios sacadas del *Tratado y averiguación* que hizo el Licenciado Polo" (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 265–83; Hampe Martínez 1999, p. 509). A related supplement on Andean religion, "Instrucción contra las cerimonias y ritos que usan los indios conforme al tiempo de su infidelidad" (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 253–62), mistakenly attributed to Ondegardo, was compiled by the Lima councilors from the materials of anonymous confession manuals and missionary treatises in prior circulation (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, p. 202; Lamana Ferrario 2012, pp. 38–39).
- ⁴ La situación misma exige y la autoridad de la Iglesia así lo establece que, a quienes de ellos hayan dado el paso a la vida cristiana, se les ponga bajo la autoridad de príncipes y magistrados cristianos. Translations of Spanish texts are my own.
- ⁵ The accusations against Bishop Sebastián de Lartaún of Cuzco caused a much-publicized delay to the start of the council (Benito 2017, pp. 103–5). Lartaún was accused of entering into shady business dealings and abetting the murder and property theft of a church canon. For a full discussion of the Third Council proceedings, see Martínez Ferrer (2017).
- ⁶ Little is known about Alcobaza's Cuzco upbringing and clerical career beyond the information provided by Garcilaso. Citing documents from the General Archive of the Indies, Medina (1904, vol. 2, p. 26) confirms that Alcobaza was the son of Garcilaso's childhood tutor, Juan de Alcobaza, and beginning in 1583 he served as a secular priest in the towns of Challabamba, Aguaton, Huallate, Capi, Guanagurte, and Corca. Bartra (1967, pp. 367, 372 n. 40) contradicts studies that identify Alcobaza as a Jesuit and co-translator of the Lima Council catechisms.
- ⁷ Santo Tomás and Oré attended the Second and Third Lima Councils, respectively, but their participation in the councils is not mentioned by the chronicler. The absence of Santo Tomás's Quechua publications and Oré's multilingual catechisms from Garcilaso's book inventory is also unexpected given Garcilaso's interest in Andean-language indoctrination (see Durand 1948; Cerrón-Palomino 1991, p. 139).

- ⁸ Aranibar (1991, p. 700) finds strong ideological affinity between the chronicler's and the Jesuit order's positions on Andean pedagogy and political affairs. Fuerst (2018, chp. 6) examines in detail Garcilaso's embrace of Jesuit missionary practices and educational institutions.
- ⁹ Addressing the thematic similarities between the *Tratado y averiguación* and the Third Council publications, in comparison to Ondegardo's other writings, García Miranda (2011) speculates that Acosta, as compiler of the *Confessionario*, may have censured aspects of Ondegardo's work that contradicted the Church's new doctrinal norms.
- ¹⁰ Juan de Matienzo, Ondegardo, and other civil authorities advocated similar prudence toward the Incas' fueros and customs. Respect for customary law was congruent with Alfonso X of Castile's medieval code, which permitted local regulations and customs that were not antagonistic to natural law, God, or royal government and approved by the lord of the territory (Christian 2006, p. 261; Dellaferrera 2004, p. 29; Duve 2010, pp. 132–33).
- ¹¹ Garcilaso's division of pre-Hispanic Peruvian history into two periods coincides with the model adopted by las Casas ([1527–1560] 1967, vol. 1, pp. 658–62; Zamora 1988, p. 97).
- ¹² Contra Ondegardo's findings of subversive intent, Estenssoro Fuchs (2003, pp. 201–3) interprets the "sorcery" of the licenciado's account as the natural byproduct of Andean-Christian contact.
- ¹³ The "Instrucción" (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 261–62) ends with a list of the native religious specialists' anti-Catholic dogmas, which asserted: there is no pardon for the gravest of sins, one should believe the *quipos* (knotted cord records) of the ancients over the writings of Christians, Christ and the devil can be adored at the same time, sexual relations outside of marriage are not sinful, etc.
- ¹⁴ Along similar lines, the *Confessionario* compels Catholic confessors to uphold indigenous rights to protection. Its standard questions for colonial indigenous authorities (curacas and caciques) touch on whether they abused native laborers through theft, work drafts, and taxation or failed to assist the poor in times of sickness and need; the questions designed for ychuris center on their use of coercion, graft, and demonic exploitation of the most vulnerable (Third Lima Council [1585] 1985, pp. 226–31, 233–34).
- ¹⁵ Bishop Alonso de la Peña Montenegro's *Itinerario para parrochos de indios* (1668, pp. 143–44) devotes a lengthy treatise to the history of the Amerindians' status as "miserables", which cites the text of the Third Council canon, followed by Acosta's *De procuranda*, Juan de Solórzano Pereira's *Política Indiana*, numerous viceregal ordinances, and royal decrees.
- ¹⁶ Aquinas declared the inherent goodness and authority of natural law and reason; natural law was the basis for the formulation of moral principles of conduct, from which church doctrine and canon law derived (see Cervantes 1994, pp. 21, 21 n. 42, 23).
- ¹⁷ [cosas] que tuvieron en sus leyes y ordenanzas muy allegadas a la ley natural, que se pudieran cotejar con los mandamientos de nuestra santa ley, y con las obras de misericordia.
- ¹⁸ See also Valera's list of similar laws instituted by the ninth Inca, Pachacuti (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 240–42). Valera compared the Inca Pachacuti's sensible laws and customs to the absolutist and anti-Inca direction of Viceroy Toledo's reforms: "The Indians, astounded by [Toledo's] absolute powers, called him the second Pachacuti, meaning that he was the reformer of their first reformer. "Their reverence and obedience to that Inca were so great that to this day they cannot forget him" (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, p. 242).
- ¹⁹ The chronicle echoes las Casas's ([1527–1560] 1967, vol. 2, p. 563) claim about the Incas' "natural government" (gobernación naturalísima, in the Aristotelian sense), which gave conquered peoples the right to preserve the local laws and customs that served the public good of the community.
- ²⁰ en una región se usaba la confesión vocal para limpiarse de los delitos.
- ²¹ Y así, interpretándolas a su imaginación y antojo, escribieron por verdades cosas que los indios no soñaron; porque de las historias verdaderas de ellos no se puede sacar misterio alguno de nuestra religión cristiana.
- ²² According to Garcilaso, the same reasons of hospitality and social courtesy explained other fanciful ideas, such as when the Europeans concluded that the Indians of Chuquisaca revered an idol named Tangatanga, akin to the Holy Trinity, that signified three deities in one (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 49–50). Zamora (1988, pp. 117–20) discusses Garcilaso's philological analysis of "tangatanga" and other Quechua terms ("Pachacamac", "huaca", "apachita", "Viracocha", etc.) in response to the way they were used by Acosta and Spanish historians (Garcilaso [1609–1617] 1960, vol. 2, pp. 43–45, 47–49; see also MacCormack 1991, pp. 335–37). In Zamora's view, Garcilaso's linguistic interpretations served his effort to moderate European assertions about the demonic influence in native beliefs and rituals.
- ²³ acaeció muchas veces que los tales delincuentes, acusados de su propia conciencia, venían a publicar ante la justicia sus ocultos pecados; porque además de creer que su ánima se condenaba, creían por muy averiguado que por su causa y por su pecado venían los males de la república, como enfermedades, muertes y malos años y otra cualquiera desgracia común o particular; y decían que querían aplacar a su dios con su muerte para que por su pecado no enviase más males al mundo.
- ²⁴ Cuando examinaban algún testigo, que por muy grave fuese el caso, le decía el juez ... '¿Prometes decir verdad al Inca?' Decía el testigo: 'Sí, prometo.' Volvía a decirle: 'Mira que la has de decir sin mezcla de mentira, ni callar parte alguna de lo que pasó, sino que digas llanamente lo que sabes de este caso.' Volvía el testigo a ratificarse diciendo: 'Así lo prometo de veras.' Entonces debajo de su promesa le dejaban decir todo lo que sabía del hecho, sin atajarle, ... de manera que por ambas las partes decía lo que sabía en favor o en contra.

- ²⁵ dijo que le dejase decir todo lo que sabía de aquel caso, porque diciendo una parte y callando otra, entendía que mentía, y que no había dicho entera verdad como lo había prometido.
- ²⁶ Estenssoro Fuchs (2003, pp. 150–55) makes this argument with regard to Garcilaso's treatment of traditional Inca song and dance in Christian liturgy.

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