

Unethnic Ethnohistory: On Peruvian Peasant Historiography and Ideas of Autochthony

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Abstract. This article is an exercise in relocating academic ethnohistory vis-à-vis vernacular ethnohistorical thinking in two respects. First, it questions whether the metahistorical native versus white opposition, which forms an all-but-unquestioned premise of most ethnohistorical paradigms, at all matches local paradigms. Second, it compares academia's "own" way of getting at colonial and postcolonial historical problems with the unofficial paleography (and archaeology) through which villagers explore the same. In Huarochirí Province (Peru), popular ethnohistory serves not to reify the concept of the autochthonous but to relativize it and detach it from the dominant national paradigm of racialized ethnicity. Its vocation is to explain how villagers can be "authentic" heirs of the land and yet not incur the racially unacceptable category of the "Indian." Collaboration with a folk paleographer shows how the colonial experience is construed—via a legend of collective "Indian" suicide—as the transcendence of racial categories.

Theoretically, postcolonial Latin American states conferred on all their subjects a citizen status implying freedom and a presumption of *respeto* (social dignity). In practice, for rural Peruvians who live in the shadow of racial and/or linguistic stigma, these attributes have to be won ever anew. In Huarochirí Province (Department of Lima), as throughout modern highland Peru, *campesinos* find the rhetoric of "ethnicity" and the "indigenous" highly problematic because they perceive these as marked terms that distance their bearers from normal standing as citizens. Far from connoting healthy pluralism, as they do in international academic discourse, terms such as "indigenous" seem to peasant ears (c. 1970–2000) to be freighted with unacceptable racial connotations and unpleasant memories of *de haut en bas* indigenism (Abercrombie 1991: 96–100; de la Cadena 2000).

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Anthropologists have long taken an equivocal stance about this fact. The classic ethnographers of the region—José Matos Mar's group in the 1950s (e.g., Matos Mar 1953, 1958; Guillén Araoz 1953)—called villagers indigenous when using anthropological jargon, as if that were a natural fact about them, but did not suggest that this was an element of self-definition. Indeed, ethnographies of Central Peru (Adams 1959; Castro Pozo 1946; Escobar 1973; Long and Roberts 1978; Mayer 2002; Smith 1989; Tschopik 1947) give the impression that until today, central highlanders have seen themselves as almost colorlessly generic rural Peruvians, unattached to any ethnic self-definition and preferring *mestizo* or regionalist and class (campesino) identities. Perhaps this willed distance from the view of Peru as composed of “ethnic groups” is itself the reason why Central Peru has attracted few strongly cultural-minded ethnographers and has acquired a more economy-driven literature. Obviously, insofar as the literature tends to suggest that some Andean populations “have” Andean cultures while others “have” Andean economy, something has gone wrong with the conceptualization of Andeanness.

The central Peruvian literature's vagueness about rural identity, which once seemed vacuous, now seems well advised under the dictum “whereof one cannot speak, be silent.” Despite advances in understanding nonelite use of terms like *mestizo* (Barragán 1992; de la Cadena 1996: 115), ethnography still largely lacks the language to speak of rural Peruvians' more specific, intracommunal and regional senses of who they are. The many ways of managing “difference” when dealing with urban outsiders (idioms of class, of “mixed” race, of regionalism or provincial loyalty, of rural/urban contrast, or of “folklore”) are obviously evoked by context and relative to its instrumentalities. The concept of *situational ethnicity* applies robustly enough. But it helps little with understanding identity in the usual sense of the word.¹ Still less do we want to continue importing ascriptive “ethnic” categories that most highlanders themselves reject and that do not justify themselves by improving analytic clarity either.

We do want to ethnographically evoke the mostly implicit yet heartfelt notions of collective self that villagers actually employ among themselves. The job requires ethnography to stop presupposing the continued underlying existence of the basic colonial dichotomy (natives versus nonnatives). Rather, one needs to follow villagers in doing what they do: reframing the project of *authenticity* by fundamentally questioning these categories and not merely by transvaluing them in the name of resistance.

Let us start by sketching the need for this questioning. In rural Peru, unlike in recent Bolivia and Ecuador, the conquest of social dignity has demanded what Marisol de la Cadena (2000: 6–7) calls the “de-

indianization” of the concept of autochthony. For those who remain in the countryside as members of peasant communities (*comunidades campesinas*), this distancing of localistic cultural identity from the stigma of the indigeno entails particularly pointed issues. Legally, the legitimacy of peasant communities rests directly on two attributes that the “official indigenism” of the eleven-year dictatorship of President Augusto Leguía (1919–30) ahistorically assumed to be the twin native essences of traditional rural land tenure: immemorial possession and collective ownership. In the *solicitudes de reconocimiento* (“recognition applications”), which have provided the legal bases of village titles since the days of President Leguía, immemorial possession usually is demonstrated through continuous inheritance from those whom the colonial state called “tributary Indians.” Collective ownership is usually proven by adducing *ayllu* or other indigenous political controls on land use. *Ayllu*, a type of corporate descent group, is an organizational device of at least Inka antiquity. The price of a highly valued civic right in modernity, therefore, is the retention of indexes of the very same colonial condition the modern project seeks to supplant. And for this reason, documents in which peasant communities claim status as such sometimes contain daring revisionisms about the meaning of colonial experience. For the 1920s, Luis Miguel Glave (1991: 248–62) has detailed one Cuzco-area village’s astonishingly heterodox self-historiography.

The present article is a study of how a village in the far less conspicuously “Indian” region of Huarochirí has constructed its identity in dealing with the contradiction. The village in question is Tupicocha, which holds lands from about 2,500 meters over sea level to about 4,800 meters on the westward flank of the Andes, a day’s bus ride southeast of Lima, at the headwaters of the Lurín River. Of the village’s 1,543 people, according to the 1993 census (Perú INEI 1994: 200), perhaps half live exclusively in the community nucleus, located on a difficult secondary road at about 3,321 meters (Stiglich 1922: 1084). Of these, most but not all belonged to the 143 households registered for 1997 as *comuneros*. The remainder either have double domiciles in Tupicocha and Lima or live full time in Lima or stay in the higher “annex” hamlets. Despite its location less than a day’s journey from the capital and its partly “semiproletarian” way of life (Weismantel 1988), as of August 2000, Tupicocha lacked electricity or other industrial infrastructures. For subsistence it relies upon an intricate system of canals, terraces, and walled pastures begun in pre-Hispanic antiquity, which the community administers. To synchronize never-ending infrastructural labor, the community relies upon a system of ten *ayllus* or *parcialidades*, which are lineal continuations of the *ayllu* of Checa as described in the 1608(?) Quechua Manuscript of Huarochirí (Taylor 1987; Salomon and Urioste

1991 [1608] and other editions; Astete Flores 1997[?]; Martínez Chuquizana 1996; Rostworowski de Díez Canseco 1978; Salomon 1997).

In many other aspects, such as deep attachment to deified natural features and intricate ayllu ritual, Huarochirí's way of life is intensely "Andean." (But not in language; Huarochiranos speak Spanish only.) Yet most Huarochiranos travel frequently to Lima as vendors, students, or workers. In the capital their ascribed identity as *serranos* (highlanders) or *provincianos* (and uglier terms behind their backs, such as the odious *indio*) conveys the indigenous stigma. This alternating context heightens the ideological discomfort involved in comunero peasant identity. What form of identity grows from this rapid alternation between contexts where subsistence depends on complexly Andean technology, organization, and inheritance, and others that offer dignity only at the price of dissociation from the first?

A Necessary Discontinuity: The Problem of the Pre-Columbian Dead

The *gentiles* (gentiles), also called *tapados* (covered ones)—that is, the pre-Columbian dead (Allen 1982; Fuenzalida Vollmar 1979; Gose 1994: 129–30; Harris 1982; Valderrama Fernández and Escalante Gutiérrez 1980; Pærregaard 1987) whose remains are found readily in the caves and ruined tombs of every Huarochirí village (Buena Mendoza 1992)—have become a symbolic focus concentrating these concerns (see Figure 1). Both outsiders and villagers feel gentiles to be among the most charged and dangerous of all local realities. The above-cited ethnographers emphasize gentiles' jealousy of the control that the living have over agriculture, and this worry, expressed in deferential ritual gestures one must perform whenever passing a pre-Hispanic tomb, has a political-legal facet.

In neighboring San Damián village, as in most Andean villages, some of the local pre-Columbian dead have come into the hands of state personnel (Isbell 1997: 150). For the national police and the soldiers stationed against guerrillas, as for teachers and health workers, human relics cause unease because they are felt to represent a vaguely malignant force that the ideologies with which state personnel are equipped cannot fend off (see Figures 2 and 3). The police officers who showed me two skulls in modern wooden cases did so because some of the officers suffered insomnia due to sleeping in the same building with what might be gentiles. They had hoped that as a putative bone expert (anthropologist) I would identify the skulls as evidence of murders so that they could dispose of the skulls within the forensic writ of their own organization. In showing me looted mummies,



Figure 1. At Machay Gentil Barroso, as in many other Huarochirí sites, archaeological tombs housing “Indian” remains are well-known features of inhabited space. Author’s photo.

the schoolteachers also hoped that as a representative of science I would desacralize the object by ruling it an archaeological relic and thereby allow them to treat it as they wanted to—that is, to reduce it to subject matter within their authoritative syllabus.

Villagers also feel unease about the gentiles but for somewhat different reasons. They judge it dangerous and wrong to take these bones or mummies away from their resting places. They regard the presence of the ancient dead in caves and in *chaucallas* (or burial houses, sometimes also called *chullpas*,² a term used throughout Peru) as a fundament of the relationship with the land. The ancients are the “first and original owners,” as one villager put it, and all others use the land on their sufferance. If offended (for example, if tombs are raided or if visitors fail to bring offerings and greetings) the ancients send a characteristic illness. Julio C. Tello, the pioneer archaeologist who made Peruvian mummies famous among archaeologists at the beginning of the twentieth century, is said to have died of this disease. Local *huaqueros* (grave-looters) exist but are regarded as disrespectful (*faltos de respeto*).

But in accepting the identity of Peruvian nationals, in setting their face to the wider political community as a progressive peasantry, Huarochirí



Figure 2. Police stationed at San Damián suffered insomnia because they thought these skulls, actually prepared for modern display and abandoned, might be gentiles or pre-Hispanic persons. Author's photo.

chiranos have set themselves at a great distance from the ancient dead. Their own ancestry does not seem to them in any way linked to the ancients. Names of individual entombed persons are not cited, even though villagers are very much interested in genealogy. Ayllus putatively have founding members, but these are not identified with the pre-Hispanic dead. Nor do villagers remark on the non-Spanish origin of many common surnames (Llacsañaupa, Cajahuaringa, etc.). Asked what sort of surnames these are, villagers describe them as “Peruvian” or as typical of Huarochirí Province but not as connoting any “race” or ethnic group. So it has devolved upon villagers to define themselves as being, at the same time, heirs of the ancient dead while genealogically discontinuous from them. One respectful circumlocution refers to pre-Hispanic mummies and bones as “the beautiful grandparents.” Yet nobody claims them as *personal* ancestors, and I never heard them referred to as “*our* grandparents.”

How can the ancient dead be the community's grandparents, yet



Figure 3. A public school director displays a pre-Hispanic mummified child stored in the schoolhouse attic. Author's photo.

not one's own grandparents? One might suppose people facing such an anomaly would embrace the common Andean mythologies of *pachakuti*, cataclysms that leave prior worlds submerged beneath the surface of this one. In fact, this common notion of rupture plays little if any part. The word is known, if at all, only from schoolbooks or journalistic accounts of Inkas.

Rather, Huarochiranos of many villages embrace a folk history in which the colonial condition is key factor. For Tupicochans, the decisive time does not match any of the events that well-known rural ideologies treat as cardinal moments (the judicial murder of Inkarrí,³ the guerrilla war against Chile in the 1880s) nor those that “national” historiography treats as decisive (the 1532 Spanish invasion, the “extirpation” campaigns c. 1608–70, the eighteenth-century neo-Inka rebellions, the Boli-

varian age). When addressing their own document legacy, villagers accord supreme importance to an otherwise obscure and uncharismatic era, the later seventeenth century. That is, the period of “mature colonialism,” which schoolbook historians picture as a time of stability if not stagnation, embodies for Tupicochans a more decisive break between prehistory and history than the Spanish invasion.

A Necessary Continuity: The Argument of Mythohistoric Inheritance and the Act of the Dead

Like innumerable Latin American communities, Tupicocha anchors its territorial claims in a collection of colonial documents, and republican litigations based on them, which it holds in its community hall. One of the most important is the “Act of the Dead” (“Auto de los muertos” in the annual inventories), an original royal provision of 1670. This document arose from a tribute squeeze related to Spain’s revenue crisis, which increased as the seventeenth century advanced (TePaske and Klein 1982).

In the text of the provision, the Viceroy Conde de Lemos responds to tributaries’ complaint of being made to pay taxes for people who had died. He responds by requiring them to meet the current adjusted tribute assessment (*retasa*) as nearly as possible by using products of communally held fields and then to present any remaining shortfall due to deaths and absences with justifying arguments. He does not recognize any particular crisis in Huarochirí, or provide relief of the root problem—namely, saddling local lords with tribute rolls while denying authority to update them. Though perhaps slightly useful to rural interests in its own day, the act was a routine bit of administrative business. But to Tupicochans, the Act of the Dead is a far more significant document; it is a charter of legitimate land tenure for the present inhabitants. Furthermore, it is, in their eyes, the source of their civic liberties.

Astonished by the distance between my understanding of the source and that of the directorate of the peasant community, I undertook an ethnographic experiment consisting of a blind comparison in paleographic rendering. The product, a double transcription, is included here as Appendixes A and B. The first transcription was made by Tupicocha’s most active amateur historian, a peasant who has held many offices in his ayllu and in the community (Rojas Alberco c. 1978 [1670]). He had already prepared it for civic use before my arrival. The second is the one I made using techniques learned in graduate school. Later in this article I will tease out the differences between the transcriptions; I will then examine the exegesis offered by this village scholar (Gushiken 1993: 119). I close the essay by comment-

ing on the importance of this folk historian's interpretation for the creation of postcolonial identity.

The folk historian who made the transcription is León Modesto Rojas Alberco, born in 1947 and active since 1973 in the elected leadership structures of both his own ayllu (Segunda Satafasca, a segment of the Sat Pasca ayllu mentioned in the 1608 Quechua source) and the peasant community. The son of a schoolteacher, he himself was forced from school in his teens. Since his short, frustrating residence in Lima, Rojas Alberco has lived an almost exclusively peasant life. He is passionately interested in history, especially that of Europe and Asia, and reads whatever printed matter comes into his reach. He owns a large library by local standards. This interest is related to his political affiliation with one of the parties of the Izquierda Unida (United Left) coalition. During his term as community secretary, Rojas Alberco voluntarily undertook to decipher the colonial holdings and became a fairly accomplished self-taught paleographer. He wrote his transcriptions in a series of private notebooks, continues to advise the community on documentation, and is the person consulted when the inventory of the community archive becomes confusing (as happens almost every year). He can transcribe colonial handwritings (including *procesal*, of which Cervantes said that not even the devil can read it) about as well as most graduate students can after initial training. He has held community offices up to and including the presidency. Today Rojas Alberco remains a devoted amateur researcher and rises at 4:00 A.M. to transcribe by candlelight before beginning his day in the fields. His eloquent speeches at civic meetings have done much to project his understanding of local history onto community opinion.

How the Act of the Dead Is Developed in Folk Exegesis

In a pathfinding study of how modern Colombians of self-defined Pasto ethnicity read colonial papers, Joanne Rappaport (1994: 106–14) argues that peasants who mobilize old writings in support of their claims are challenged by the opacity of colonial legal language and face the challenge with characteristic interpretative strategies. The next few paragraphs report on Tupicochan interpretative strategies, which are, of course, not conditioned only by ideas about correct style in reading (Boyarín 1993), but also by orally transmitted notions of general history and by the pragmatic intent of the immediate reading (Howard-Malverde 1994: 122).

The regionally consensual notion of general history that forms Rojas Alberco's interpretative frame is the belief that rock shelters and chaucallas full of human bones are the result of a mass "Indian" suicide. The pragmatic

intent of modern reading in Tupicocha is, first, to provide in intracommunity forums, a doctrine of legitimacy that could be used in the land litigation endemic to the area. Legitimacy, as noted earlier, includes the need to be at once autochthonous in origin and organization, and “modern” and “national” in handling of law and in self-presentation. But these purposes dovetail with an oral tradition embodying much older and more general models of identity and change. The latter give rise to strategies of interpretation that can best be followed by tracing the details of reader response to the text.

My interest concerns not issues of factuality but attributes of the dialogue between past and present and especially the means by which readers create an effective past despite being unequipped with the privileged means to establish official readings (legal or historical training or licensing for paleography⁴). For that reason, I pursue comparison under two rubrics, namely: first, local and academic expectations about the art of transcription and, second, local and academic readings of specific items of text.

In his work as community secretary, Rojas Alberco had by 1979 seen many transcripts made by legal paleographers, but his ideas about what paleography should achieve remained, and still remain, vernacular. His method differs from courtroom practice primarily insofar as he seeks to create not a transcription but a facsimile of the ancient document. That is, while paleographers in the courts of law (like historians) regard only lexical content and legal format as meaningful, Huarochiranos regard all the physical attributes of the original—including such variables as handwriting size, signature flourishes and rubrics, or traces of seals and kinds of bindings—as meaningful. The less the new copy reflects them, the less it conveys the “same” or “true” content. Huarochiranos call colonial handwritings *mosaico* (or less often, *latín*) and regard them as authentic but impenetrable. The task of the folk paleographer is to produce an artifact that allows modern readers to have the experience not of reading old words in modern characters, but rather of actually reading *mosaico*. The implicit theory, then, is not one concerning a body of verbal content that may travel unaltered between sets of writing media that physically look unlike each other (a parchment manuscript versus a typed page). Rather, it postulates a writing-event uniquely vested in its physical form. A homemade transcription does use graphemes technically different from *mosaico*, but these are an instrumentality designed to work subconsciously so that we can experience an “original,” just as halftone printing is a technology designed to work subconsciously so that viewers of a reproduction can experience an original painting. Folk transcription invites a reader to take vicarious part in the original writing-event rather than extracting its “content” by eliminating difficult “forms.”

This method brings us to the second comparison—namely, the differences between Rojas Alberco's and my own readings of particular bits of text. The parts of the text that challenged Rojas Alberco did so not only because of difficult or discolored handwriting and changes in orthography but also because of references to unfamiliar institutions. In transcribing the *Auto de los muertos*, the key difficulty for Rojas Alberco was his unfamiliarity with the obsolete terminology of *revisitas* and *retasas*⁵ (*letassas* in his transcription). This makes the document as a whole less clear to him and creates at key turns areas of uncertain meaning that must be interpreted.

This hazard is of course not peculiar to folk paleographers. Every paleographer, faced with a lack of clarity, relies heavily upon context to choose among *prima facie* interpretations. Working with certain styles like *encadenada* or *procesal*, one must do so incessantly. Such handwriting is inherently full of ambiguities at the level of characters and even of whole words. It functioned well in its own time only because it applied to a restricted set of genre frames and, within them, supplied readers liberally with formulaic passages and redundancies. Different readings arise when a villager brings to this writing a repertory of known genres and contextual frames that is different from that of an academic historian. The result is that frames from oral history, current ritual, and pragmatic political concerns motivate choices among plausible *prima facie* readings.

At twelve or more points, Rojas Alberco (L.M.R.A.) chose differently from me (F.S.). The more significant differences are the following:

1. F.S.: "hedad de dies y ocho" (age of eighteen)
L.M.R.A.: "verdad de diciocho" (truth of eighteen)
Comment: Rojas Alberco understands the writer to be concerned with mendacity on the part of the Spanish authority, whom he suspects of taxing people not in "truth" of taxable age.
2. F.S.: "Dando rason pormenor de las cantidades que ubiere cobrado" (giving detailed account of the amounts he may have charged)
L.M.R.A.: "dando su soporte manos de las castigos dados" (giving his support [to] hands of the punishments given)
COMMENT: Rojas Alberco took what he believed to be a plausible contextual fact—the Spanish "hand" raised in "punishments" of the tributaries—as sufficient to warrant a syntactically irregular reading. (Since originals often include long chains of ambiguously articulated clauses, all paleographers sometimes tolerate syntactic anomalies.)
3. F.S.: "Que yndios an muerto despues de la ultima retasa" (what Indians have died after the last reassessment)
"Que yndios an muerto desde la ultima retassa" (what Indians have died since the last reassessment)

L.M.R.A.: “q’ Indios han muerto de pena de la ultima letassa . . .” (what Indians have died of sorrow [or suffering, pain] from the last reassessment)

“Q’ indios han muertos de pena de la ultima letassa” (same)

COMMENT: There are parallel discrepancies in transcriptions of the two sentences. As above, contemporary experience of tax problems and oral tradition about Spanish exploiters (aided by patriotic grade-school teaching) motivate the reading that taxation made Indians die of sorrow.

4. F.S.: “en cuya conformidad” (in conformity with which)
L.M.R.A.: “en la ya contaminidad” (in the already [existing] contamination [nonstandard Spanish])
COMMENT: Death and pollution are strongly associated everywhere in the Andes. Even the long-buried dead are thought to give off a deadly substance (*antimonio*; see Abercrombie and Dillon 1988). The word *contamination*, which in Spanish-language journalism about ecological problems plays a role like the English word *pollution*, supplied a contextual frame for the expected consequences of the above “deaths.”
5. F.S.: “alcalde de mayordomías” (a local officer, roughly an administrator of community properties)
L.M.R.A.: “Alcalde Mayor, de Minas” (superior officer of mines)
COMMENT: Rojas Alberco’s home village has small mines, and more important ones are not far away. Folk tradition not unrealistically associates mining with forced labor. Although Rojas Alberco is familiar with *mayordomías*, he found the link between Spanish taxation and forced labor a more compelling interpretive frame. Both readings can be squared with comparable sources, and the choice may lie in an area of indeterminacy.

Scrutiny of the transcription, then, reveals that in the eyes of a folk paleographer, the Act of the Dead recorded a situation where tax abuses (taxing the underaged, dragooning peasants to become miners, and imposing severe physical punishments) had in some way caused many tributaries to die. Their deaths, Rojas Alberco interprets, contaminated the village area. Oral tradition fills in the unknowns in the picture.

When Huarochirí Turned Charnel House: The Village Paleographer’s Oral Exegesis of the Act of the Dead

For Rojas Alberco and the many who credit his interpretations, this small slice of administrative paperwork and the incident of violence and resis-

tance it commemorates establish a baseline of identity. In the folk historiography he transmits to fellow villagers, it is nothing less than the record of a total social transformation.

In 1994, Rojas Alberco explained that “the dead” mentioned in the title of the Act of the Dead are the same as the gentiles, that is, the mummified dead and ancient bones found in the countryside. The following translation of his words preserves nonstandard features, such as inconsistent use of tenses (see the original in Appendix C; also see Figures 4 and 5):

The Act of the Dead means that the spokesman and the leaders of the different *huarangas* [Inka and post-Inka “thousands”] have presented a writ . . . because in those years, as this document states, the whole territory of Huarochirí found itself in a horrible putrefaction of human beings, which was spreading, and was present hither and yon. The smells were unbearable. But why did the dead die, I asked myself? In the first place, because of the forced labor the Spaniards made the Indians [do]. And then, because of the tribute demanded, which was also laid on the Indians. Another thing, as my old fellow-townsperson say, was because they didn’t want to eat the salt.⁶ Not even taste the salt. That’s what brought them to killing themselves among themselves. That is, the death, that is, the act of death, means that they themselves died, it wasn’t the Spaniards who have killed them, but they themselves. It was so much, that a leader of the community of Santiago,⁷ I think it was, . . . gave the first cry, that all those abuses which existed be abolished. That’s why the title [is] Act of the Dead, it deals with how all that can be avoided. . . . They strangled each other. They didn’t fight among themselves. Surely they have to decide among themselves that one [would strangle] the other, and so forth successively, so as not to suffer any longer this wicked punishment which there was due to the Spaniards . . . with a rope around the neck.

In 1997, at my request, he returned to the same theme (see the original in Appendix D). Below is the translation of the oral exegesis:

[The mummified gentiles and the bones in ancient tombs are the natives who] have simply refused to be slaves of the Spaniards, [and chosen] to decide [their fate] among themselves. Because of the tribute and the danger, and the forced labor, they decided to kill themselves. To commit suicide. Because the Act of the Dead says, that because they wouldn’t attend to the eating of salt, or rather go on with the salt, or continue the forced labor, and such heavy tributes, is when they decided to exterminate themselves. And the extermination that

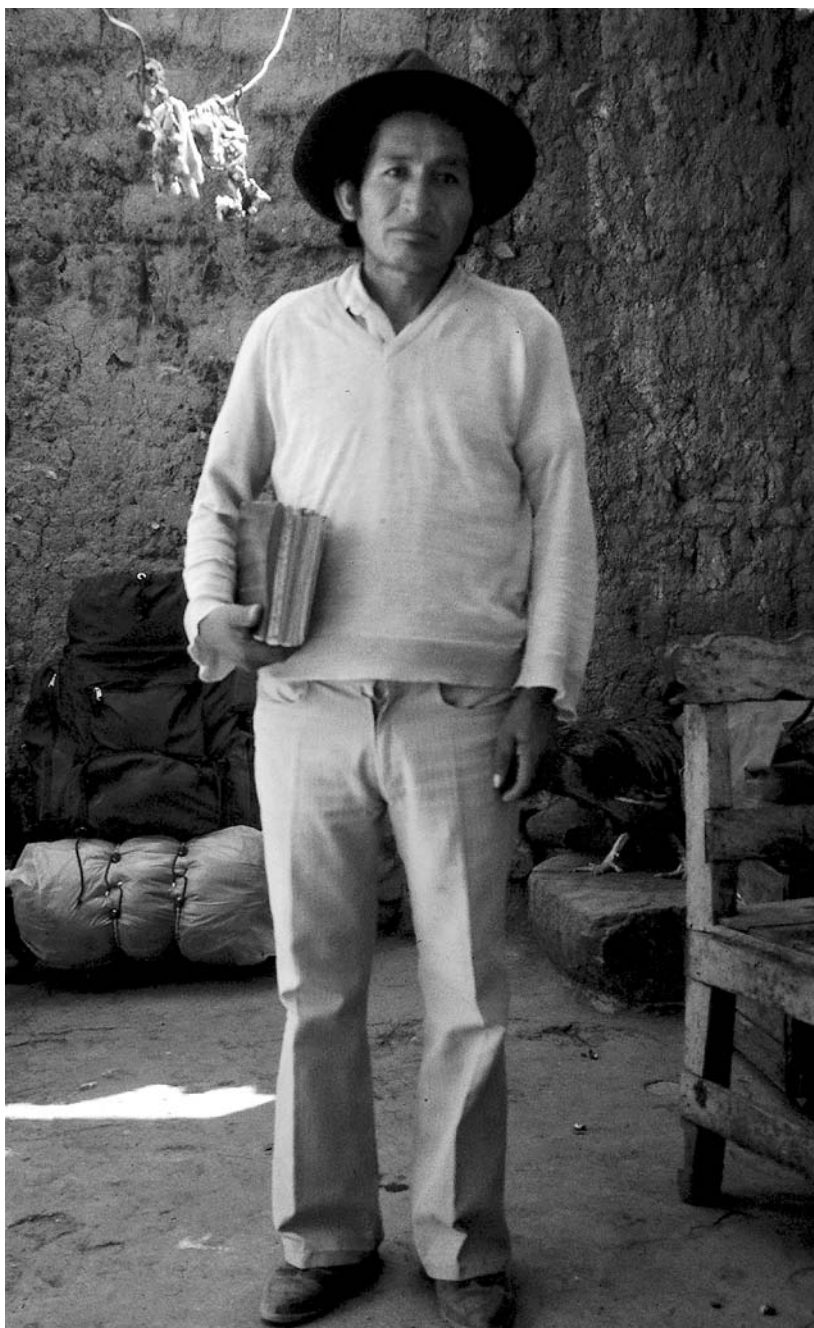


Figure 4. León Modesto Rojas Alberco, Tupicocha villager and amateur paleographer, holding his study notebooks. Author's photo.

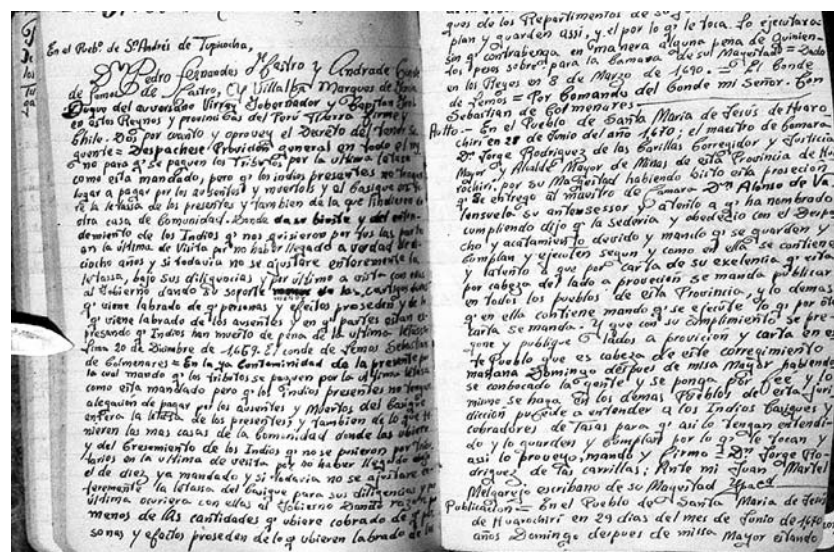


Figure 5. Pages of Rojas Alberco's transcription or facsimile of the Act of the Dead [Auto des los muertos]. Author's photo.

happened, well you know, a person gets very ugly when he's already dead. When the body decomposes. So it [the Act] says that all Huarochirí was one huge decomposition. Horrible! There was already a lot of plague, because it had contaminated the environment. So the District Governor of Huarochirí ordered them to suspend the tribute and the forced labor. That's how a man from Sangallaya⁸ presented this document because it was no longer possible to live in all of Huarochirí. In other words, this was an Indian from Sangallaya. He wasn't a Spaniard or a governor or an overseer. Because he also chose to rise up or ask satisfaction so there wouldn't be any of this. Because the whole environment was already too contaminated. And it was suspended. And when it was suspended, they say, all the bells were ringing wildly. In other words the bells pealed all over Huarochirí when all that was suspended. . . . They truly had won the crucial battle that they were living through.

[F.S.: If they died by committing suicide, why are their bones gathered up inside the *chaucallas* and not scattered in various places?]

They hung themselves off the cliffs. After that they have been found too, because there are places where there are no cliffs, too, but there is a quantity of bones. An enormous quantity. Like at Collanche,⁹ for

example, where there are tombs with, umm, it seems, [tombs] of the millionaires, the native lords, the chiefs, the leaders as they are called now. They have been buried in trenches, like, but not inside the earth as is done now, but instead with flagstones that are made into burial houses. Some burial houses. And they're not buried alone, but rather with all their belongings, their ancient ceramics, pitchers, as if to say that in the other life, they mean to go on living. [Laughs]

[F.s.: And after the pealing of the bells?]

It [Spanish domination] still existed, but punishments were executed in a lesser degree.

[F.s.: Were the survivors of the great suicide the ancestors of those who are alive now?]

Hardly at all. It [their population] almost came to an end. They came to an end. Because I don't find surnames from those years now.

The concept of the village as having been left to the ancestors of its present inhabitants by the suicide of its aborigines—left to them in an improved condition, because their suicide redeemed peasants from bondage—has entered the stream of oral tradition as it is voiced in contexts where community rather than state institutions set context.

Is this interpretation consensual or contested? Rojas Alberco has become very influential through his thoughtful oratory at community functions, as well as by being the community's expert on writing of all kinds. I never heard his version questioned overtly. But this is not just a local legend. The basic argument that "Indians" emancipated the land and its possessors forever by a mass suicide is extremely widespread in rural Central Peru. In every village of central Huarochirí I heard similar versions. If asked about cliffside ruins or burial caves, peasants throughout the region respond with similar narratives.

But the above current of learning is not the only one in play. Folk historiography runs in channels almost entirely separate from official education via the village's public school. Though curricula prescribed in Lima theoretically provide space for local themes, teachers have few local-oriented teaching materials. A few teachers respect local forms of knowledge, and even compile them, but most treat them as obsolete, or superstitious, or suitable for preservation only as folklore. (*Folklore* is a Peruvian term for portions of culture immobilized and separated for display as fetishes of localism.) Like virtually all Andean villagers, Tupicochan peasants consider it normal for "educated" knowledge, which they value highly, to remain segregated from and incongruent with the proprietary truths of village lore.

Anyone who wishes to position a discourse closer to the “national” and “educated” mold tends to rely on semipublished (usually photocopied) “monographs” presenting a miscellany of applied-science lore and socioeconomic statistics. Many were created as theses in government teachers colleges, reflecting the political ideologies—from 1950s developmentalism, through the rigid Marxism of the 1980s, to current neoliberalism—which reigned there. Together with such regional-history classics as Sotelo 1942, and with the civic albums occasionally published by associations of ex-villagers resident in Lima (for example, Contreras Tello 1994), these theses tend to become locally canonized as vehicles of “educated” historical knowledge. People use them when preparing for civic ceremonies associated with the state, such as the patriotic festival the Twenty-Eighth of July, or for school graduation speeches, and they trot them out when a stranger asks for historical information. These volumes are kept at the schoolhouse, at the opposite end of town from the community hall, where colonial charters rest. Contestation does not take the form of collating them empirically in mutual challenge. Rather, it takes the form of alternative leadership speech at dissimilar occasions—sometimes even by the same person before different audiences. Segregating different versions of history in different forums makes it easy to accept more than one as “true.” That is opportune because carrying contestation to the level where one version becomes incompatible with another (e.g., by confronting folk archaeology with radiocarbon dating) would challenge the entire identity structure described earlier.

Conclusions: On Collaborative Research, Colonial Historiography, and Cultural Identity

The ethnohistorical experiment reported here concentrates on exploring a peer relationship with a peasant researcher. While partaking of Richard Price’s (1990: xix) moral sympathy for a local narrative that contends with its present, and Rappaport’s interest in contention over control of the useful past, it chiefly concerns Stephen Gudeman and Alberto Rivera’s (1995: 245) insistence that anthropological fieldwork is done “within a community of inquiry” long before it is sent “home” to begin its rounds in academe. A field-worker necessarily documents a society’s ongoing self-interrogation through its internal dialogues. A researcher becomes a specialized party to “conversations” of which he or she is not the sole author and from which his or her own account can never be independent.

If a group contains people dedicated to reflection on historical “conversation,” they therefore need not be seen as “native intellectuals” but as

“fellow intellectuals.” Once we view them that way, the discrepancies between a foreign inquirer’s findings and a local intellectual’s findings need not be treated either as the interestingly unbridgeable distance between “emic” schemata, or as a margin of error due to cultural interferences (though these continue to be unavoidable concerns). Some of the discrepancies are interpretative, similar in kind to academic disagreements among researchers operating with different partial perspectives on unknown wholes. But the perspectival differences and those of assumed background “truth” are likely to be larger than those occurring within academia. If our interlocutors’ results seem “strange,” they are not by that token to be presumed less experientially grounded. For all its local ideological freight and methodological informality, a vernacular past might demand daring substantive reassessments of the purportedly known “history” within which we tend to frame everything bearing the prefix *ethno*.

The remarks that close this essay are concerned first with the ideological import, and then with the historiographic challenge, of Central Peru’s ethnic suicide narrative. In popular historical understanding, as opposed to schooling,¹⁰ the self-inflicted colonial hecatomb of the “Indians,” and not the Spanish Conquest, is what put an end to the primordial age. Villagers interpret the numerous Late Intermediate archaeological ruins around them as sites where the “Indians” hanged themselves or buried themselves alive en masse. But unlike the crimes of the Spanish, which also are remembered, the great suicide is seen as a moral victory because it left Huarochirí a land of free people ever afterward.

Modern families do not see themselves as lineal descendants of these ancient folk. On the many occasions when I have asked whether there are any indígenas or indios in Huarochirí, the replies have been unanimous: “Not one.” All the same, local families do consider themselves as the ancient people’s heirs.¹¹ Not only do the living owe the suicides access to lands, they also owe them emancipation. These gifts warrant everlasting reverence.

This version of the past shows originality and intellectual self-reliance; it is an independent solution to the enigmas of historical discontinuity, putting the facts as they are known into a coherent order, without reliance on the models of state hegemony projected by schools, churches, and non-governmental organizations. But to appreciate this model fully one must go further in two directions.

The first is to recognize a peasant community as a research community. Tupicocha is continually engaged in studying its own written records, mostly for current administrative purposes but sometimes for more far-reaching ones. In doing so, its methodology is autonomous. It seeks to ac-

count for facts as observed from the local point of view, by prioritizing evidence from local sources (observations about structures and land features as well as documents; Rappaport 1990, 1994) and by developing hypotheses compatible with oral tradition as well as useful for addressing a pragmatic political agenda such as relations with the state and with adjacent communities (Krupat 1992). The “peasant intellectuals” who take leadership in self-research and, in other contexts, self-ethnography are to a large extent engaged in the *normal* and constantly underestimated intellectual enterprise of communal existence. While some of them, like Rojas Alberco, have functioned as oppositional figures, the Gramscian tradition’s emphasis on oppositional and collaborative relations with dominators (Ranger 1993), and the supposed dependence upon dialogue with elites and their oppositions in the intellectual process among the poor, misses the degree to which self-study forms a part of rural society’s standing internal infrastructure.

The second is to note that the view of history emerging from village historiography differs from the academic view of colonialism in ways that deserve to be taken seriously. It is not useful to belittle its conclusions as picturesque errors, even if the route to them involves errors of paleography and gross archaeological misdatings. It is useful to notice that these conclusions open interesting questions. Academic studies of the effect of colonial experience on rural identities has usually accentuated the implantation of “Indian-ness” as a death-and-taxes attribute of ordinary social competence (Salomon and Guevara-Gil 1994; Stern 1982; Spalding 1984; Lavallé 1982). Oral history research tends to accentuate narratives about the colonial era (especially the interminably discussed Inkarrí motif; Burga 1988; Flores Galindo 1987; Ortiz Rescaniere 1973) as an era of oppression made bearable by millennial hopes.

Huaro-chiranos remember the mid-colonial era otherwise, because they are interested in the exit from Indian-ness. While not disputing the martyrdom of “Indians” or understating the evil of the old regime—indeed, while affirming it more massively than historians do by making the entire archaeological scene its monument—they see colonial time as the period during which their predecessors emerged on their own initiative from the bondage of the “Inka-Hapsburg period,” as Tristan Platt (1997: 222) daringly calls it. The Bolivarian era, which is the emancipationist focus of the history all Peruvians learn in school, has much less salience in folk historiography. From the modern village point of view, colonial history is no longer the era in which Andean peoples became “the people called Indians” (as it was circa 1608, when an unknown native put these words into the preface of the Quechua source). On the contrary, colonialism was the time when the pre-Hispanic (i.e., “Indian”) way of life was left behind and

the culture recognized as “ours”—the culture of village self-management—emerged.

As a hypothesis, this is worth serious thought. We do not in fact know when Huarochiranos stopped being unambiguously called “Indians” or when they entered the ethnically ambiguous way of life they now practice. We do not know the degree to which nonlocal people replaced those of local pre-Hispanic descent during the low points of native population. The dates during which the village developed its impressive system of community democracy remain uncertain. So the notion that self-management and nonstigmatizing self-definition began under the colony is not necessarily wrong. In fact, the idea of a late-colonial self-emancipation may be an important historiographical lead. The notion that in this era self-regulation replaced dynastic lordship might be grounded in the long, slow contest between *kuraka* dynastic interests and power aggregating around more colonial, but also more participatory, institutions such as religious brotherhoods and village councils. This struggle, Thierry Saignes (1999) has suggested, forms a leitmotif of seventeenth-century rural history. Sinclair Thomson (1996) argues that the demolition of compromised *kuraka* rule after the defeat of the great indigenous rebellions of the 1780s inaugurated a period of political growth for the nondynastic institutions. The little-known processes of those times might well have included the emergence of an increasingly egalitarian regimen, still baroque in its ritual forms, well before the new democracy that the republic began to trumpet from Lima. The regimen of village self-governance has certainly maintained a margin of difference from purportedly democratic but in practice centralist and class-bound republican institutions.

The Act of the Dead, therefore, can be seen as symbolic of a non-ethnic citizen identity, which derives citizenship from endogenous history rather than from the fiat of external liberators (as Bolivarian-centered historiography propounds). Although the mythohistorical idiom is unfamiliar to us, and the periodization surprising, the basic reasoning is not incompatible with a recent historiography that seeks to trace the sources of peasants’ “Peruvian” and “citizen” identities through grassroots events. Florencia E. Mallon’s (1993) and Mark Thurner’s (1997) histories of the War of the Pacific in the countryside have greatly clarified how, a century after the fall of the Neo-Inka rebels, notions of citizen rights as endogenous and ancestral—ideas not so different from the ones expounded here—stirred anti-Chilean peasant militias all over Central Peru, including Tupicocha.

Nonetheless, the relation among culture, history, and structure in Tupicocha still poses some remarkable problems. This least indigenist of mentalities, it appears, is the one that enabled communities to retain “Andean”

and even pre-Hispanic cultural structure (the federated-ayllu form of governance, closely isomorphic with pre-Hispanic or even pre-Inka patterns), which more purposefully ethnic collectivities have long since relinquished. Such are the ethnohistoric realities with which ethnography is struggling to catch up.

Appendix A
Paleographic Transcription of The Act of the Dead,
by León Modesto Rojas Alberco

El Auto de los Muertos

En el Pueb^o de Sⁿ Andrés de Tupicocha,

Dⁿ Pedro fernandes de Castro y Andrade Conde de Lemos de Castro y Villalba Marques de Jarcia Duque del Aversano Virrey Gobernador y Capitan Genl. en estos Reynos y provincias del Perú Tierra firme y Chile. Doi por quanto yo provey el Decreto del tenor Siguiete == Despachese Provicion general en todo el reyno para q' se paguen los Tributos por la ultima letasa como esta mandado, pero q' los indios presentes no tengan lugar a pagar por los ausentes y muertos ye el Casique en tere la tassa de los presentes y tambien de la que lindieren de otra casa de Comunidad. Donde da su bieste y del entendimiento de los Indios q' nos quisieron por tus las partes en la última de Visita por no haber llegado a verdad de diciocho años y se todavia no se ajustare enteramente la letassa, bajo sus diligencias, y por último a vista con ellas el Gobierno dando su soporte [tarjado ilegible; infraescrito: manos] de las castigos dados q' viene labrado de a' personas y efectos proseden y de lo q' viene labrado de los ausente y en q' partes estan expresando q' Indios han muerto de pena de la ultima letassa de Lima 20 de Diciembre de 1669. El conde de Lemos Sebastian de Colmenares = En la ya contaminidad de la presente por la cual mando q' los tributos se paguen por la ultima letasa como esta mandado pero q' los indios presentes no tengan alegación de pagar por los ausentes y Muertos del Casique entera la letasa de los presentes, y tambien de lo que teniereen las mas casas de la Comunidad donde las ubiere y del Cresamiento de los Indios q' no se pusieron por tributarios en la ultima de vesita por no haber llegado abajo de diez ya mandado y si todavia no se ajustare enteramente la letassa del Casique para sus diligencias y por ultima ocuriera con ellas al Gobierno Dando razon por menos de las cantidades q' ubiere cobrado de q' personas y efectos proseden de

lo que q' ubieren labrado de los ausentes y en q' partes estan expresado q' indios han muertos de pena de la ultima letasa y el Corregidor de la Provincia de Huarochirí; cera q' el casique o casiques de los Repartimientos de su Jurisdicción lo cumplan y guarden assi, y el por lo q' le toca. Lo ejecutara sin q' contrabenga en manera alguna pena de Quinientos pesos sobre para la Camara de su Magestad = Dado en los Reyes en 8 de Marzo de 1,690 [*sic*]. = El Conde de Lemos = Por Comando del Conde mi señor. Con Sebastian de Colmenares——

Auto —En el pueblo de Santa Maria de Jesús de Huarochirí en 28 de Junio del año 1,670; el maestro de Camara Dⁿ Jorge Rodriguez de las bariillas Corregidor y Justicia Mayor y Alcalde Mayor, de Minas de esta Provincia de Huarochirí, por su Magestad habiendo bisto esta proseccion q' se entrego al maestro de Camara Dⁿ Alonso de Valensuela su antesessor y atento a q' ha nombrado cumpliendo dijo q' la sederia y obedecio con el Despacho y acatamiento devido y mando q' se guarden y cumplan y ejecuten segun y como en ella se contiene y atento a que por carta de su exelencia q' esta por cabeza del lado a provoción se manda publicar en todos los pueblos de esta Provincia, y lo demas q' en ella contiene mando q' se ejecute lo q' por otra carta se manda. Y que con su cumplimiento se pregone y publique¹² lados a provoción y carta en este Pueblo que es cabeza de este corregimiento mañana Domingo despues de misa mayor habiendose conbocado la gente y se ponga por feé y lo mismo se haga en los demas Pueblos de esta jurisdicción puede a entender a los Indios Casiques y cobradores de Tasas para q' asi lo tengan entendido y lo guarden y cumplan por lo q' le tocan y assi lo proueyo, mando y firmo == Dⁿ Jorge Rodriguez de las carrillas; Ante mi Juan Martel Melgarejo escribano de su Magestad Ypae^d [*sic*]——

Publicación En el Pueblo de Santa María de Jesús de Huarochirí en 29 dias del mes de Junio de 1670 años Domingo despues de missa mayor estando en la Plaza Pública de este dicho Pueblo y habiendo mucho; Converso de gente por los de Pedro Culcaya, Indio pregonero. Se pregonon y se publico la provoción contenidamente segun y como en ella se contiene y el auto de su obedecimiento en altas boces y despues de hacer publicado por interpretacion de Dⁿ Diego Comba Julca alcalde Ordinario de este otro Pueblo y por los de otro pregonero se dio a entender, a los Indios en la lengua Matterna ssiendo testigos Feliciano de Escobar Escribano Rl Dⁿ Pedro de Carbajal y Salvador Urquiza = Juan Martel Melgarejo Escribano de su Magestad y Público——Concuerta

con su original q' queda en el archivo del papel de esta Provincia de Huarchirí [*sic*] a que me refiero y para q' de ello conste de la parte de los Indios del Pueblo de Sⁿ Andrés de Tupicocha del presente en el Pueblo de Huarochirí en 14 de Julio del año 1670 [*large letters sic*].——

[imitated signatures, large]

Y En fee deello Dⁿ cedros [rubric] En Ante Mi
Dⁿ Verde

Ju^o Martel Melgarejo Escr^o pub

Es Copia Fiel de su original q' se transcribe para sus demas fines de la q' doy fé en Tupicocha a los 8 dias del año 1979. Ex-secretario de la Comunidad. Firmado Febrero: [*sic*, blanco]

León M. Rojas A. [rubrica]

Appendix B Paleographic Transcription of The Act of the Dead, by Frank Salomon

Don Pedro Fernández de Castro y Andrade Conde de Lemos Castro, Andrade y Billalba Marques de Jarcia Duque del [Tavirsano?] birrey y governador y capitan general en estos Reynos y provincias de Peru tierra firme y Chile etc. Por quanto yo provey el decreto del tenor siguiente[. . .]

Despachese provisión general en todo el Reyno para que se paguen los tributos por la ultima tassa como esta mandado, pero que los yndios que [roto]sentes no tengan [obligación de?] pagar por los ausentes y muertos

[Upper left-hand margin:] para el pueblo de S Andres de Tupicocha

y el cacique entere la retassa de los presentes. y tambien de lo que rindieren las chacras de comunidad. donde las ubiere y de cresimiento de los indios que nase pusieron por tributarios en la ultima revisita por no aver llegado a la hedad de dies y ocho años y si todavia no se ajustase enteramente la Retassa haga sus diligencias / y por ultimo ocurra con ellas al gobierno dando rason pormenor de las cantidades que

ubiere cobrado de que personas y fechas proseden y de lo que ubiere cobrado de los ausentes e en que partes estan. expresando que yndios an muerto despues de la ultima retasa [hecha?] veynte de dissiembre de mil y seyssyentos y sesenta y nuebe el conde de lemos. Sebastian de Colmenares. = en cuya conformidad [roto] di la presente por la qual mando. Que los tributarios se paguen por la ultima retassa como esta mandado pero que los yndios presentes no tengan obligacion de pagar por los ausentes ny muertos y el cassique enterera la retassa de los presentes. y tambien de lo que rindieren las chacaras de la comunidad en donde las ubieren y del cresimiento de los yndios que no pusieron por tributarios en la ultima revisita. por no auer llegado a hedad de dies y ocho años. y si todabia no se ajustare enteramente la Retassa dicho casique hara sus diligencias. y por ultimo ocurrir con ellos al gobierno. dando rrason por menor de la cantidad de que ubiere cobrado de que personas y efetos proceden y de lo que ubiere cobrado de los ausentes. y en que partes estan expresando [roto] que yndios an muerto desde la ultima retassa y el corregidor de la provincia de guarochiri ara que el casique o casiques de los Repartimientos de su jurisdision lo cumplen y guarden assi, y el por lo que le toca lo executara sin que contrabenga en manera alguna pena de quinientos pesos de oro para la camara de su magestad, fecha en los Reyes en ocho de marzo de mil y seiscientos y setenta años. == el conde de lemos. == Por m[an?]dado del conde mi señor. Don Sebastián de Colmenares.

[margin] Auto

En el pueblo de Santa Maria Jesús de guarochiri en beynte y ocho de junio de mil y seyscientos y setenta años, el maestro de canpo don Jorge rodrigues de las barrillas. corregidor y justicia mayor y alcalde de mayordomías de esta [roto] prouincia de guarochiri por su magestad haviendo visto esta provission que le entrego el maestro de campo don Alonso de Balensuela su antessessor y atento a que no se ha dado cumplimiento Dixo que la obedecia y obedesio con el respeto y acatamiento devido. y mando que se guarde cumpla y execute segun y como en ella se contiene y atento a que por carta de su ex[celenci]a que esta por cabeza de la dicha provission. se manda publicar en todos los pueblos de esta provincia. y lo demas que en ella se contiene mando que se execute lo que por dicha carta se manda. Y que en su cumplimiento se pregone y publique la dicha provision y carta en este pueblo que es la cabeza de este corregimiento mañana Domingo despues de missa mayor aviendo conbocado la jente y se ponga por fee. y lo mismo

hagan en los demas pueblos. de esta jurisdision. y se de a entender a los yndios casiques y cobradores de tassas. para que ansi lo tengan entendido. y lo guarden y cumplan por lo que le tocan y asi lo proueyo—mando y firmo == Don jorge rodriguez de las barrillas—Ante mi Juan martel melgarejo escribano de su majestad y p[ubli]co

[margin] Publicacion

En este pueblo de santa maria de Jesus de guarochiri, en veynte y nueve dias del mes de junio de mil y seyscientos y setenta años, Domingo despues de missa mayor estando en la plassa publica deste pueblo y aciendo mucho curso de jente por bos de pedro calcaya yndio pregonero a pregones y publico—la provission [roto] contenido en este segun y como en ella contiene y el auto de obedecimiento, en altas boses. y despues de auer publicado. por ynterpretacion de Don Diego Carbajulca alcalde ordinario de este dicho pueblo y por bos del dicho pregonero se dio a entender a los yndios en la lengua materna¹³ siendo testigos sebastian de escobar escribano de [roto] y don pedro de carbajal y salvador urquissa == juan martel melgarejo escribano de su majestad y publico.—

conquerda con su original que queda en el archivo de papeles de esta provincia de guarochiri la que me afirmo. y para que de ello conste de la parte de los yndios del pueblo de san andres de tupicocha di el presente en el pueblo de guarochiri en catorse de julio de mil y seiscientos setenta. en fee dello [firmas]¹⁴

Appendix C

1994 Oral Exegesis of the Act of the Dead, by León Modesto Rojas Alberco

[El Auto de los Muertos] significa que han presentado un escrito el procurador y los principales de los pueblos de indios de diferentes huarangas . . . porque en aquellos años, según reza el documento este, que ya todo el territorio de Huarochirí se encontraba en una horrible putrefacción de seres humanos que se diseminaban, se encontraban por aquí y por acá. Ya no se podía soportar los olores. Pero ¿por qué los muertos han muerto?, yo me preguntaba. Es porque, primer lugar, por los trabajos forzados que hacían los españoles contra los indios. Y después, por el tributo exigido que también se daba a los indios. Otro, del según dicen mis antiguos compoblanos, el de no querer ellos

comer la sal. Ni querer probar la sal. Eso fue lo que a ellos llevó a matarse entre ellos. O sea, la muerte, o sea, el auto de la muerte significa que ellos mismos se han muerto, no fueron los españoles quienes los han matado, sino que ellos mismos. Ya de tanto fue, que un principal de la comunidad de Santiago creo que es . . . dió el primer grito que se abula todo ese abuso que había. Por eso es que [el] título auto de los muertos trata como se puede evitar todo eso . . . ellos mismos se ahorcaban. No se peleaban entre ellos. Seguramente se han de decidir q que entre ellos a que al uno, al otro, y así sucesivamente para no sufrir mas este castigo tan malévoló que hubo de los españoles . . . con las sogas al cuello.

Appendix D
1997 Oral Exegesis of the Act of the Dead,
by León Modesto Rojas Alberco

[Los *gentiles* momificados y los huesos en tumbas antiguas son *naturales* quienes] simplemente han renunciado de ser esclavos de los españoles para determinarse ellos mismos. Porque el tributo y el azar, y el trabajo forzado, decidieron en matarse. Suicidarse. Porque el auto de los muertos dice, por no atender a comer sal, mejor dicho, a seguir con la sal, a seguir con trabajo forzado y a seguir en los tributos tan fuertes, es donde ellos determinaron exterminarse. Y al exterminio que hubo, Ud. sabe, que una persona se vuelve muy fea cuando está muerta ya. Cuando el cuerpo se descompone. Así dice que todo Huarochirí era una descomposición enorme. ¡Horrible! Ya había mucha plaga ya, porque había contaminado el ambiente. Entonces el Corregidor de Huarochirí ordenó a que se suspende el tributo y el trabajo forzado. Ahí es que un Sangallayino se presentó este documento porque ya no se podía vivir ya en todo Huarochirí. O sea este era un indio Sangallayino. No era tampoco un español, un Corregidor ni un capataz. Que también quiso sublevarse o pidió satisfacción para que eso, no haiga eso. Porque estaba ya demasiado contaminado todo el ambiente. Y se suspendió. Y al suspenderse se echó las campanas a vuelo se dice, o sea se repicaron las campanas en todo Huarochirí cuando ya se suspendió eso. . . . A la verdad que ellos habían ganado la batalla crucial en que ellos vivían.

[F.s.: Si se murieron suicidándose, ¿por qué sus huesos están recogidos en las *chaucallas* y no esparcidos en varios sitios?]

Se han colgado de las peñas. Después se han trasladado también, porque también hay lugares donde no hay peñas, nada, pero se encuentra cantidad de huesos. Una enorme cantidad. Como de Collanche, por ejemplo, son tumbas donde han, este [dubitación] parece de los millonarios, de los curacas, de los caciques, de los principales que se los llamaron ahora; de ellos han sido enterrado en fosas así, pero no adentro en la tierra como ahora se hace, sino con piedras lajas se han hecho unas chullpas. Unos chullpas. Y no están enterrados solos, sino ahí están todas sus pertenencias, sus huacos, vasijas, como quien quiere decir que en la otra vida se va a seguir viviendo. [Risa]

[F.s.: ¿Y después del repique de las campanas?]

Sí hubo [el dominio español] pero en menor grado de ejecución de su castigo.

[F.s.: ¿Los sobrevivientes del gran suicidio, son los ancestros de los que viven ahora?]

Muy poco. Se acabó casi. Se acabaron. Porque no encuentro apellidos de esos años ahora.

Notes

The author cordially thanks the Junta Directiva de la Comunidad Campesina San Andrés de Tupicocha for access to its archive in 1995, 1997, and 2000. The help of León Modesto Rojas Alberco is especially appreciated. The fieldwork on which this essay rests was done under the sponsorship of the National Science Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundations, with help from the School of American Research and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Research Committee. This support is gratefully acknowledged.

- 1 By identity in the usual sense, I mean a category of collective self that is a strong pole of solidarity and a warrant for including persons in the web of generalized reciprocity. The aforementioned situational categories do not have this property. For example, most Huarochirí households are “semiproletarian” (Janvry 1981: 84) and informally commercial as well as peasant; situationally “Andean” as well as “mestizo”; urban as well as rural; nationally oriented as well as provincial; and media oriented as well as folkloric. But none of these motivate feelings of solidarity.
- 2 The regional term *kullpi*, common north of the Rímac River, is not often heard in central Huarochirí.
- 3 Inkarrí (i.e., Inca Rey, the Inca King) is a mythic personage conflating Ata-

- huallpa Inca; Túpac Amaru, the ruler of the rump Inka regime at Villcabamba; and Túpac Amaru II, the great mid-eighteenth-century rebel (Burga 1988).
- 4 Peruvian law requires ancient documents submitted in evidence to be transcribed by a court-authorized paleographer.
 - 5 The former term refers to inspections updating tribute rolls; the latter, to re-assessment of rates.
 - 6 This refers to the previous state monopoly on salt, remembered as an oppressive tax. It continued into republican times.
 - 7 That is, the neighboring village of Santiago de Tuna.
 - 8 Sangallaya is a village close to the provincial capital of Huarochirí.
 - 9 An unstudied local archaeological site with burials.
 - 10 Both forms of learning are credited with truth value but are cited in different contexts and rarely compared.
 - 11 Is a logical link missing? If probed about whether their own ancestors were immigrants from elsewhere, villagers admit the possibility in principle but exemplify it by showing how *other* villages or descent groups have *atypical* immigrant origins. Ayllu Cacarima supposedly has roots in Huancayo, and some Sunicancha villagers are thought to be of Italian ancestry.
 - 12 At this point in the document is a sign consisting of a clockwise spiral.
 - 13 This phrase usually signifies a regional language rather than Quechua. Quechua was called *lengua general* or *lengua del inga* by functionaries. The extinct regional language of Huarochirí was related to Aymara and more closely to modern Kauli (Taylor 1983).
 - 14 Transcription in F.S.'s notebook no. 95-03 pp. 47-51.

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