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THE ISSUE OF THE DATE OF BIRTH OF THE CHRONICLER GUAMAN POMA DE AYALA

as Debated at the Colloquium in Poitiers in 2010

BY

JEAN-PHILIPPE HUSSON

mong the twelve papers dedicated to the life and work of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala delivered at the symposium in Poitiers (21 and 22 October 2010),1 two dealt with the interesting but tricky question of the chronicler's date of birth. The first was presented by José Carlos de la Puente Luna,² who approached the issue from an original point of view—that of Martín de Ayala, Guaman Poma's mestizo halfbrother. This innovative approach produced several new results that will be presented here in detail. The second paper is by Juan Ossio,³ who found the issue so interesting that he chose to follow-up on De la Puente's discussion instead of talking on the subject he had originally chosen for his contribution. His article pertains more to criticism than to developing the issue, insofar as he primarily identifies various errors, real or supposed, in the work of his young colleague, such as the exact identity of Father Martín de Ayala, for example, or Martín's precise relationship to the indigenous chronicler Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala. All in all, we find very significant progress in these two contributions

¹ This conference was entitled "Au croisement des pensées européenne et andine: la chronique de Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala" ("In the Interplay of European and Andean Thinking: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's Chronicle"). The publisher of the acts of the conference is the Editorial Fund of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú in collaboration with Apus Graph Editores, Lima, in the series Colección de Estudios Andinos

² José Carlos de la Puente Luna is Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Texas State University. The title of his article is "El capitán, el ermitaño y el cronista, o cuándo nació el autor de la *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*" ("The Captain, the Hermit, and the Chronicler, or the Date of Birth of the Author of the *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*").

³ Juan Ossio is Professor at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. The title of his article is "Mito e historia en torno a la fecha de nacimiento de Guaman Poma de Ayala" ("Myth and History with Regard to the Date of Birth of Guaman Poma de Ayala").

compared to previous endeavors to determine the date of birth of the author of *El primer nueva corónica* y buen gobierno.⁴

The Historical Persistence of the Issue on the Date of Birth of Guaman Poma de Ayala

Before looking closely at De la Puente's and Ossio's contributions, let us briefly recall the most noteworthy contributions of their predecessors in order to have an idea of the historical persistence of this issue about Guaman Poma's date of birth. I will begin with Raúl Porras Barrenechea's book on Guaman Poma de Ayala, published in 1948 and reissued in 1999 in a compilation of other works by the same author. Here, we find two contradictory passages dealing with Guaman Poma's date of birth:

"Tres páginas más adelante aparece otra escena familiar en la que figuran el padre y la madre del autor, su hermano el padre Martín de Ayala y el propio don Felipe de Ayala. Al pie dice: 'En la ciudad de Huamanga' (17). Este último dibujo induce a una seria duda sobre la edad de Huamán Poma. El hermano Martín, nacido hacia 1550, aparece como un hombre maduro y como sacerdote de misa y el cronista como un niño de 12 a 15 años de edad. Es clara la deducción de que el cronista es menor en seis o siete años que su hermano el clérigo. Esto conduciría a pensar que Felipe Huamán de Ayala pudo nacer hacia 1556 y que por lo tanto al escribir su crónica no tuviese 80 años sino tan sólo 59 ó 60." (Porras Barrenechea 1999, 72)

"Huamán Poma protesta inútilmente, alegando ante el escribano las provisiones reales, pero, según un estribillo trágico '¡no hay remedio!' y el viajero valetudinario tiene que reemprender el viaje dirigiéndose por el camino de Huancavelica a Lima. Esto debió ocurrir hacia 1613. El cronista dice tener entonces como 80 años. No es edad de peregrinar, pero, aparte de que su cronología no es muy prolija, lleva en su alforja de viaje para presentarlo al Virrey el manuscrito de su *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, que ha de ser enviado al Rey y ha de aliviar en el futuro la suerte de los indios. El ansia de redención le vuelve joven." (Porras Barrenechea 1999, 82)

("Three pages later, another family scene appears with the father and mother of the author, his brother Father Martín de Ayala, and Felipe de Ayala himself. At the bottom is written: 'In the city of Huamanga' (17). This last drawing raises serious doubts about Guaman Poma's age. His brother Martín, born around 1550, appears as a mature man and a priest who celebrates Mass, and the chronicler as a twelve to fifteen year-old child. It is obvious that the chronicler is six or seven years younger than the priest, his brother. This would lead one to think that Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala was born around 1556 and therefore that he was around fifty-nine or sixty when he wrote his chronicle, and not eighty.") (Porras Barrenechea 1999, 72)

⁴ The First New Chronicle and Good Government.

("Guaman Poma protests in vain, alleging the royal resolutions before the notary, but, as a tragic refrain says, 'there is no remedy', and the valetudinarian traveler has to resume his journey and head down the path from Huancavelica to Lima. This is likely to have taken place around 1613. The chronicler then says that he is eighty years old. This is not an age for undertaking a pilgrimage, but apart from the fact that his chronology is not very clear, he carries in his travel saddlebag the manuscript of his *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* to present it to the Viceroy and have it sent to the King so that it can alleviate the future fate of the Indians. The longing for redemption rejuvenates him.") (Porras Barrenechea 1999, 82)

Porras Barrenechea's comments should not be interpreted as being his alone. If we look at the works of the authors who followed him—and only the serious ones—we realize that they oscillate between the same positions, that is to say, between an age of eighty years between 1613 and 1615 (born between 1533 and 1535), attested at the end of the volume, and being born around 1560, attested, for instance, by the gap that separated him from his half-brother Martín, who was born around 1550.

I will start my review of scholars with Georges Lobsiger, chairman of the Swiss Society of Americanists and author of several articles on Guaman Poma in the 1960s:

"3. Quelle est sa date de naissance?

Il est impossible de trouver des précisions dans la chronique. En effet, Poma dit qu'en 1613, il est âgé de 80 ans (II, III, p. 1084) ; [un peu] plus bas, il en avoue 88 (p. 1096), un peu plus loin (p. 1098), il note 80 ans. Il serait donc né soit en 1533, soit en 1525 : il est permis de ne pas tenir compte de ces deux dates, que contredisent tous ses récits." (Lobsiger, mars 1960, 12)

("3. What is his date of birth?

You cannot find any exact information in the chronicle. Indeed, Poma says that in 1613 he is eighty years old (pp. II, III, 1084); [a bit] later he admits that he is eighty-eight (p. 1096), later again (p. 1098), he writes eighty. Hence, he would have been born either in 1533 or in 1525: one can disregard these two dates as they are denied by all his narratives.")

I continue with Abraham Padilla Bendezú, who wrote an interesting and well documented book in 1979:

"El maestro Porras dio crédito a la información del cronista en cuanto a que en 1614 tenía 80 años, de lo que dedujo que nació en 1534 o 1535. Esteve Barba llega a la misma conclusión. Debe aclararse, sin embargo, que el doctor Porras

 $^{^5}$ Two page numbers must be corrected in this excerpt: "1084" must be changed into "1094", and "1098" into "1108".

no descartó la posibilidad de que naciera en 1556, al comparar los cuadros de las páginas 14 y 17." [Figs. 1 y 2]. (Padilla Bendezú 1979, 38–39)

"El segundo [Fig. 2] [el cuadro de la p. 17] muestra a los mismos personajes en Huamanga (p. 17) con el agregado del propio cronista, quien tiene la apariencia de un menor de diez o quince años, en tanto que Martín ya se halla con el hábito de sacerdote. Ambos dibujos permiten concluir que *Martín era mayor que Felipe*." (Padilla Bendezú 1979, 39)

("Master Porras gave credence to the chronicler when he wrote that he was eighty in 1614 and deduced that he was born in 1534 or 1535. Esteve Barba comes to the same conclusion. It should however be noted that Dr. Porras did not rule out the idea that he was born in 1556, when comparing the drawings on pages 14 and 17.") [Figs. 1 and 2] (Padilla Bendezú 1979, 38–39)

("The second one [Fig. 2] [drawing on p. 17] shows the same individuals in Huamanga (p. 17) this time with the chronicler himself who has the appearance of a child about ten or fifteen years old, while Martín is already wearing the habit of a priest. We can deduce from both pictures that Martín was older than Felipe.") (Padilla Bendezú 1979, 39)

Let us now consult José Varallanos, whose work was also published in 1979 but which took a different tone. While Padilla Bendezú does not take any ethnic connections into consideration, except that of Guaman Poma with the Huamanga region, Varallanos, for rather personal reasons, evokes a connection with the region of Cajamarca:

"Respaldados hoy por los instrumentos hallados por Monseñor Prado Tello y por el Padre Mañaricua, y tomando en cuenta la edad que declara el propio cronista y en relación con el desenvolvimiento de hechos históricos acaecidos; volvamos a plantear nuestra antigua tesis expuesta desde 1940 (5), y no rechazada aún por uno de sus más exigentes biógrafos como Porras Barrenechea: que don Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala naciera en Huánuco el Viejo y que, siendo niño de pocos años, fuera trasladado por sus padres a Huamanga. Por ello, por ser oriundo de aquella zona y ciudad, su incansable proclama y jactancia: 'ciudad de Guánuco ... casta y generación de Allauca Guánuco Yarovilca Capac Apo Guaman Chaua Guaman Poma del Reino', por decir: mi tierra natal y de mi estirpe (6)." (José Varallanos 1979, 30)

("Based in the documents found recently by Monsignor Prado Tello and Father Mañaricua, and taking into account the declaration of the chronicler himself about his age and the link with the development of the historical events that happened, we can consider again our old theory put forward in 1940 (5), and never rejected by any of the most demanding biographers, such as Porras Barrenechea: the thesis saying that Don Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala was born in Huánuco el Viejo and that his parents moved to Huamanga when he was an infant. This would explain, as a native of that area and city, his restless and arrogant proclamation: 'city of Guánuco ... lineage and generation of Allauca Guánuco Yarovilca Capac

Apo Guaman Chaua Guaman Poma of this kingdom,' meaning: my homeland and my lineage (6).") (José Varallanos 1979, 30)

The excerpt with which I end this brief historical overview is taken from Mercedes López-Baralt's impressive five-hundred-page work, in which the author gives her own opinion on Guaman Poma's year of birth. Published almost a decade after the two works quoted above, this book belongs fundamentally to the genre of literature and tries to bring out "la escritura colonial hispanoamericana desde la perspectiva literaria del siglo veinte" ("the Hispanic American colonial literary writing from the perspective of the twentieth century"). In connection with the issue under consideration here, the following remark can be noted:

"Las controversias suscitadas por la biografía de Guamán Poma no perdonan los datos elementales de fecha y lugar de nacimiento. La carta-crónica ofrece noticias contradictorias al respecto. El autor declara tener la edad de ochenta años en 1614, pp. 962, 1094, 1096, 1108, 1109, lo que situaría la fecha de su nacimiento hacia 1534. O hacia 1535, ya que en su carta de 1615 dice tener la misma edad. En ese caso habría nacido en Huánuco, donde sus padres vivieron hasta 1539 o 1542. Sin embargo, en el colofón de la obra Guamán Poma afirma ser natural de San Cristóbal de Suntunto en la provincia de Lucanas (hoy distrito de Cabana) del departamento de Ayacucho [...] De ahí la posibilidad de que haya nacido alrededor de 1550, también admitida por Porras. Por la importancia de la región de Lucanas en la obra del cronista, ésta es la tesis más aceptada." (López-Baralt 1988, 68–69)

("Controversies around the biography of Guaman Poma include the elementary data about his date and place of birth. The chronicle-letter presents contradictory information about them. The author declares that he is eighty in 1614, pp. 962, 1094, 1096, 1108, 1109, which would mean that he was born around 1534; or around 1535, since he states the same age in his letter of 1615. In that case he would have been born in Huánuco, where his parents lived until 1539 or 1542. However, in the colophon, Guaman Poma claims to be a native of San Cristobal de Suntunto in the province of Lucanas (today the Cabana district), department of Ayacucho [...] Hence the possibility that he was born around 1550, also supported by Porras. Given the importance of the Lucanas region in the work of the chronicler, this is the most accepted theory.") (López-Baralt 1988, 68–69)

This series of historical quotations allows us to assert that the issue addressed by de la Puente and Ossio in their respective articles is precisely of the same kind as faced by all the authors quoted above. The answers that were given depend, of course, on the option chosen by the researcher, but they nevertheless form part of a broader canvas.

⁶ Quoted from the title of the first chapter, p. [17].

However, it is De la Puente who provides the most satisfying answers to the questions raised in the papers previously mentioned. There are three such answers, each one consisting of a separate assessment of the ages of Guaman Poma and of his half-brother Martín de Ayala at separate periods of their lives. It is now time to examine these conclusions, taking care to reintegrate them—in contrast to what De la Puente did—into each of the three separate periods he identified.

First Aspect of the Dating of De la Puente: Martín's Birth

De la Puente evokes first of all (2015, 5–6) the opinion of Abraham Padilla Bendezú, according to whom Martín was born in 1550 from the union of Captain Luis Dávalos de Ayala and Doña Juana Curi Ocllo. He finds this opinion probable, as well as the view that they resided in Cuzco. In fact, according to both Padilla Bendezú and Ossio, Father Martín de Ayala's childhood and initial training took place in this city. De la Puente adds that if these statements are true, not least that Martín is the child of the Spanish captain, one can go further and claim that he was conceived during one of the latter's two stays in Cuzco. Indeed, in the late 1540s and early 1550s, Luis Dávalos de Ayala twice had the opportunity of staying in Cuzco, in, respectively, 1548 and in 1551. From a statistical point of view, the first stay is by far the one more likely to have resulted in Martín de Ayala's birth, and it is also the easiest to situate chronologically. In fact, the witnesses of a "probanza de méritos y servicios" ("proof of merits and services") set up by Dávalos in 1557 claim that, after the Battle of Jaquijaguana (9 April 1548), the signatory went to Cuzco with Pedro de la Gasca and stayed during "ciertos días" ("some days") by his side, until his companion went back to Lima. The famous Huaynarima distribution of encomiendas took place in the immediate proximity of Cuzco, between mid-July and mid-August 1548. Thus, we can easily conclude that the "some days" here mentioned probably lasted for a period of about a month, easily allowing for physical contact between Dávalos and Juana Curi Ocllo. The result was the birth of Martín in the first months of 1549. The infant remained in the hands of Juana Curi Ocllo and eventually became integrated into the couple formed by her and Don Martín de Ayala when they got married.

On page 14 of the *Nueva corónica* (Fig. 1), the drawing shows Martín de Ayala receiving the Holy Spirit "en la ciudad del Cuzco" ("in the city of Cuzco"), as stated on the drawing. When he was seven, Guaman Poma



Fig. 1: Guaman Poma, *Nueva corónica*, p. [14]. Don Martín Guaman Mallqui de Ayala, Doña Juana Curi Ocllo, and Martín. The Royal Library, GKS 2232 4°.



Fig. 2: Guaman Poma, *Nueva corónica*, p. [17]. Don Martín Guaman Mallqui de Ayala, Doña Juana Curi Ocllo, Martín, and Felipe. The Royal Library, GKS 2232 4°.

tells us, Martín began his service at the Hospital for Indians of Cuzco, the construction of which had begun a year after that of Huamanga—that is to say, in 1556. At the age of twelve, Martín received the "hábito de ermitaño" ("hermit's habit").

All that has been hitherto stated follows from the relationship with Juana Curi Ocllo, which according to De la Puente took place during Dávalos's first stay in Cuzco. If this hypothesis should prove untrue—which seems less likely but is still possible—we would suggest that this was in the months between February and October 1551. At that time, "el capitán Dávalos estuvo en Cuzco, donde un tal Hernando de Cabra lo nombró su albacea y tenedor de bienes, revelando así las conexiones del capitán con la ciudad y sus habitantes" ("Captain Dávalos was in Cuzco, where a certain Hernando de Cabra appointed him executor and holder of goods, thus revealing that the captain had relations to the city and its inhabitants"). This second option implies a lower age for the young Martín by two or three more years than we had initially established. But everything else concerning the integration of Martín into the family of Don Martín Guaman Mallqui remains fully valid.

De la Puente brings no new information about Guaman Poma but maintains his agreement with the advocates of a date of birth around 1560, and remains opposed to those who evoke evidence at the end of the chronicle in favor of Guaman Poma's birth being around 1534. His conclusion on this issue is: "El cronista habría nacido, pues, hacia 1560" ("the chronicler was in all probability born around 1560") (De la Puente 2015, 20).

Second Aspect of the Dating of De la Puente: Guaman Poma's Family

The second aspect is illustrated by the drawing on page 17 of the *Nueva corónica* (Fig. 2). It shows the four members of Guaman Poma's family that we know about, namely Don Martín Guaman Mallqui, Doña Juana Curi Ocllo, the young Martín, and the even younger last-born infant. We will not assume that persons on the drawing are represented with their exact age. At best, we can try to assign to them an approximate age: Guaman Poma seems to be between seven and ten, and his half-brother between eighteen and twenty-five.

The fact remains that this drawing is perfectly representative of the age difference between Guaman Poma and Martín. This difference is certainly less accurate than that based on the first aspect studied, but perfectly consistent with what has been observed.

Third Aspect of the Dating of De la Puente: Martín's Death

The third dating possibility concerns the difference in age between Guaman Poma and his half-brother at the end of the life of the latter. This requires a brief review of the last years of Martín's life. In 1590, by order of Fray Gregorio de Montalvo, bishop of Cuzco, Father Martín de Ayala had to quit his work as chaplain at the Hospital of the Indians of St. John of God, founded in 1555 in Cuzco, to serve as interim pastor in the village of Canaria, in the province of Vilcashuaman, near Cuzco. Shortly after his return to Huamanga, probably in 1591, Martín died and was buried in the Church of San Francisco linked to the hospital. According to Guaman Poma, Martín was forty-two at the time, an age that corresponds exactly to the difference between the most probable years of his birth (1549) and his death (1591).

So, Martín de Ayala lived between these two dates. Let us listen to De la Puente draw his conclusions: "It is possible that his condition as an illegitimate *mestizo* has condemned him, at least in the beginning, to the status of relative marginality of a hermit; a status he has later overcome by ensuring the functions of parish priest and chaplain in a hospital of Indians, which are those functions that Guaman Poma de Ayala assigns to him. After all, although many mestizos were ordained, many others were not or were only partially ordained, receiving only minor orders. Martín de Ayala's youth and years of maturity were characterized precisely by the ambivalent position of the religious orders and royal and ecclesiastical authorities on this thorny issue. Low lineage and illegitimacy betrayed the aspirations of many mestizos who were aspiring to the priesthood. Despite these institutional obstacles, Father Ayala managed to climb up the hierarchy. For instance, Guaman Poma, who calls him 'father' and not 'brother,' says that Martín was 'pastor and hospital beneficiary,' implying that he was appointed to this function by the Bishop of Cuzco."

The Value of Ossio's Criticism

The three concordances shown above have the considerable advantage of being largely independent of one another. They represent three distinct opportunities for Martín de Ayala to have been born around 1549, and two for Guaman Poma to have been born around 1560. It is on these points that Ossio mainly agrees with de la Puente, and they are the most important issues of the debate. However, divergences exist

and on examining them, it can be seen how they might be resolved. I will begin with those mentioned in the article by Ossio, and end with those reflected on by De la Puente in his article.

According to Ossio, De la Puente's article contains two weaknesses. The first is that he did not take into account the fact that Guaman Poma, because of his young age—between nine and eleven years old—could not have been a true informer in the service of Cristóbal de Albornoz. From our point of view, this observation is obviously correct. Thus, Ossio was entirely entitled to mention it, even though the importance of this problem still seems quite limited as it does not question the age difference between Guaman Poma and Martín de Ayala. It could also be mentioned that Guaman Poma could possibly have reported his thoughts to Cristóbal de Albornoz at a later date. In any case, and this is the most important point, there is nothing in Ossio's objection that can be seen as challenging the dates attributed to Martín de Ayala.

More serious in itself, De la Puente's second error is not much more serious than the first with regard to the content. It concerns the question of kinship ties between Guaman Poma, on the one hand, and Martín Guaman Mallqui and Father Martín de Ayala, on the other, as supposedly his father and brother, respectively. But these links are denied, or at least seriously challenged by De la Puente, who writes: "Martín Guaman Mallqui, indio Andamarca y yanacona del Hospital de Naturales de Huamanga, compañero del Padre Ayala y supuesto padre del cronista" ("Martín Guaman Mallqui, Indian from Andamarca and yanacona of the Hospital of Indians of Huamanga, companion of Father Martín de Ayala and alleged father of the chronicler") (De la Puente 2015, 21). This view is probably very questionable, if for no other reason than that Guaman Poma, who presents these individuals as, respectively, his father and his half-brother, gains no obvious advantage thereby. Anyway, just as in the previous case, this judgment does not imply any error made by the chronicler with regard to his father and half-brother.

If we now turn our focus to Juan Ossio, it is clear that he does not walk away from any criticism unscathed either. Even though Ossio supports the idea that Guaman Poma was born around 1560, he refers to the five extracts on the first page of his analysis—all situated in the last two hundred and fifty pages of his book—stating that in his opinion they present evidence of an earlier date of birth. The proof is not, in fact, convincing since the first evidence appears only on page 962 [976]. In other words, Guaman Poma would have waited until the last fifth of his work to come forth with this information. In addition, the age he



Fig. 3a and b (opposite page): Guaman Poma, *Nueva corónica*, p. [1105] and p. [200].3a: Guaman Poma de Ayala on his way to Lima with his son. 3b: A member of the third "street" (*calle*) or age group. The Royal Library, GKS 2232 4°.



reveals at this point of his chronicle—eighty, but also eighty-eight on one occasion—is in flagrant contradiction with the date of birth (1560) that would allow him to be in agreement with what we have previously noted. The contradiction disappears when we realize that Guaman Poma, in this part of his work, systematically states his age when he wants to be seen as a victim of persecution. Hence his tendency at the end of his chronicle not to give his actual age but to assert that he belongs to a group whose maximum age—eighty or eighty-eight years—obviously makes him appear older than he is.

The members of this age group can sometimes have very varying appearances, as one can see on the drawings juxtaposed by Ossio:

In the two drawings in Fig. 3a–b, we can see, in the first one, Guaman Poma in the process of actually traveling, and in the second one as a very old, weakened man trying to walk. Despite their very different physical appearances, they belong to the same age group. Ossio draws the conclusion that Guaman Poma had little concern with sticking to realities. The mistake is obvious here. Both illustrations are realistic. But when they are traveling, Guaman Poma represents the age group in its youngest manifestation, while the other character embodies it at its oldest. Despite their differences, the age which characterizes them is the same, if we refer, in the case of Guaman Poma, to other sources than the drawing of him. The Andean system of age designation admits only five groups for men and five for women. Hence Juan Ossio's mistake: he does not see that Guaman Poma uses two different systems.

Finally, despite these few errors, De la Puente has given a new impetus to the studies on Guaman Poma. The work that we have tried to present and that will be published by the Catholic University of Peru, is of the highest quality. We believe that it provides a definitive answer to a question that researchers have struggled with for a century. We applaud that, little by little, scholars are achieving an increasingly clear understanding of Guaman Poma and his work.

SUMMARY

Jean-Philippe Husson: The Issue of the Date of Birth of the Chronicler Guaman Poma de Ayala, as Debated at the Colloquium in Poitiers in 2010.

The date of birth of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala is a question that has been taken up many times by specialists of the Indian chronicler, but it has not yet been solved to the satisfaction of all scholars. Two opposed approaches have been suggested. In the opinion of some, Guaman Poma must have been born around 1560. Others believe that he would have been eighty years old when he completed his chronicle, and that therefore he was born in 1534 or 1535. In order to solve this problem, the author of the present contribution applies all of the three criteria singled out by José de la Puente Luna in his paper read at the colloquium on Guaman Poma held in 2010 in Poitiers, due to be published in Lima in 2015, with the result that all three criteria lead to the same conclusion: a date of 1560, rather than 1534/1535. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of the latter date in the chronicle before page 962 [976], which may reflect the Inca system of classifying individuals by broad age groups.

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