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With summaries

KØBENHAVN 2015
UDGIVET AF DET KONGELIGE BIBLIOTEK

Om billedet på smudsomslaget se s. 600.

Det kronede monogram på kartonomslaget er tegnet af
Erik Ellegaard Frederiksen efter et bind fra Frederik 3.s bibliotek

Om titelvignetten se s. 356.

© Forfatterne og Det Kongelige Bibliotek

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Fund og Forskning er et peer-reviewed tidsskrift.

Trykt på Munken Premium Cream 13, 115 g
Dette papir overholder de i ISO 9706:1998
fastsatte krav til langtidsholdbart papir.

Grafisk tilrettelæggelse: Jakob K. Meile

Tryk og indbinding: Bording ½
Printed in Livonia
Oplag: 500 eks.

ISSN 0069-9896
ISBN 978-87-7023-136-7

DISENTANGLING KNOTS

Real and fictional *kipu* systems in the *Naples documents*,
Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios*, Guaman Poma's *Nueva*
corónica, and Raimondo de Sangro's *Lettera apologetica*¹

BY

DAVIDE DOMENICI

In 1996, the so-called Naples documents, a heterogeneous group of objects and manuscripts containing unprecedented claims on Peruvian colonial history, ignited a passionate controversy among Andean ethnohistorians. Scholars were sharply divided between those who trusted the authenticity of the documents and those who considered them a bold forgery. Among the most surprising claims is the attribution to the *mestizo* Jesuit Blas Valera (1545–1597), whose “secret life” is the main subject of the documents, of the authorship of the manuscript *El primer nueva corónica i buen gobierno* of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (c.1550–c.1616)—one of the treasures of the Danish Royal Library since c.1660 (GKS 2232 4°; Peru, 1615). Any discussion of the authenticity of these documents thus means tackling questions at the core of Andean ethnohistory and of Peruvian, as well as Danish national heritage.

The Naples documents are full of textual links to various important works, such as the *Nueva corónica*, the *Comentarios reales de los Incas* by Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616), and especially to the *Lettera Apologetica*, an Italian text published by the Neapolitan intellectual Raimondo de Sangro (1710–71) in 1750. The many stories they feature tell of disparate characters ranging from Columbus to Pizarro, from Blas Valera to Amedeo, the Italian Duke of Aosta and viceroy of Ethiopia before WWII. This complex web of stories and textual relationships means that any verdict on the authenticity of the documents—or even

¹ I owe a special gratitude to R. Tom Zuidema who read various earlier drafts of this article and, besides providing thoughtful suggestions, always encouraged and supported my work with his unsurpassed knowledge, wisdom and enthusiasm. Sabine Hyland and Laura Laurencich Minelli read and commented previous versions of this paper. Ivan Boserup, besides discussing the paper and offering a prestigious venue for its publication, is to be credited for his excellent editing work. The responsibility for every error or misunderstanding in the text is solely mine.

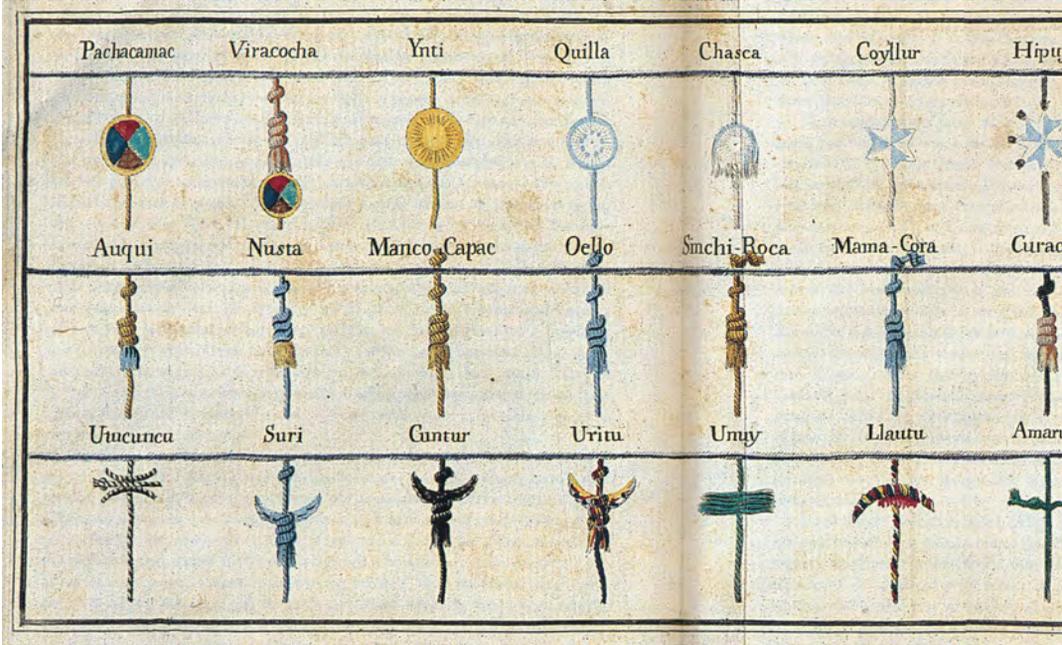
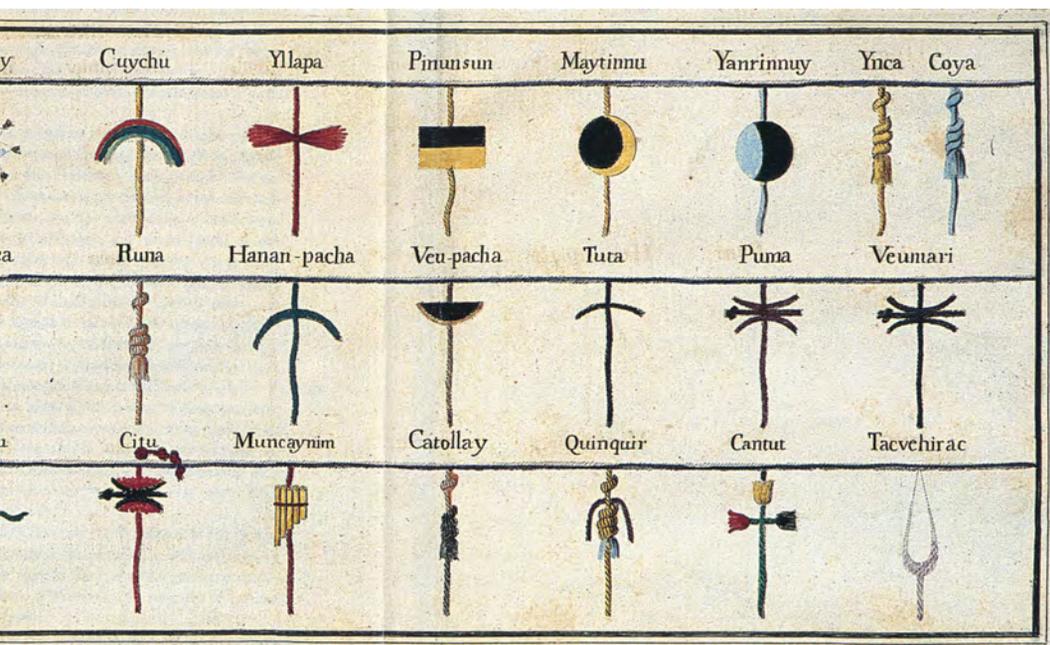


Fig. 1: Plate 1 of Raimondo de Sangro, *Lettera Apologetica*, illustrating forty pictorial master signs and the corresponding Quechua master words.

a careful study of the scholarly debate—seems to require a great deal of knowledge, not only of Andean matters. The whole story of the manuscripts could be told starting with the 16th century conquest of Peru, flowing downstream to the ongoing scholarly debate, or backwards, going upstream from the strange modern discovery of the documents to the early colonial mysteries they claim to reveal. In any case, with the absence of firm points of reference, the risk of getting lost in a forest of details is high.

The present article is an attempt to overcome this problem. I try to look at the Naples documents from a different angle. One of the main topics in the documents is the description of a syllabic khipu writing system previously known only as an eccentric creation by Raimondo de Sangro. One of the documents—*Historia et Rudimenta Linguae Piruanorum*—is even claimed to be the direct source of De Sangro's *Lettera Apologetica*. Given these premises, I feel that the *Lettera Apologetica*, a famous book published in 1750, is the best and firmest vantage point from which to start for a telling of the whole story. In other words, I



attempt to look at the Naples documents from Raimondo de Sangro's point of view.

From De Sangro's Point of View

In 1750, as a consequence of enlightened intellectuals' interest in exotic writing systems and of the "inkamania" that affected European noble courts, the Neapolitan Raimondo de Sangro, an eclectic alchemist, freemason, and writer, who was also known as the seventh Prince of Sansevero, published his *Lettera Apologetica*.² The book was put on the papal Index of dangerous reading. It should probably be viewed as a serious and subtle attack on the contemporary biblical fundamentalism of the Catholic church (Spruit 2002: 62–63) under cover of a quite messy

² The complete title of the book is: *Lettera Apologetica dell'Esercitato Accademico della Crusca contenente la Difesa del Libro Intitolato Lettere d'una Peruana Per rispetto alla supposizione de' Quipu scritta alla Duchessa di S**** e Dalla medesima fatta pubblicare.*

but entertaining treatise in which lengthy discussions on military arts and the history of writing are coupled with the description of a syllabic writing system based on Inka khipu, the knotted cords that Andean peoples used as record keeping devices, and whose specific functioning, beyond its numerical decimal value, is still poorly understood (Locke 1923; Ascher and Ascher 1981; Quilter and Urton 2002; Urton 2003, 2008; Urton and Brezine 2011; Brokaw 2003, 2010; Niles 2007; Hyland 2014; Hyland et al. 2014).

As De Sangro himself explained, the reason which led him to describe the syllabic khipu system had been the reaction of the Duchess of S**** (the anonymous addressee of the book, identified by some as Mariangela Ardinghelli) to the at the time recent publication of the best-selling novel *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747) by Madame de Graffigny (Françoise d'Issembourg d'Happancourt). In this novel, another “inkamania” product, the young Peruvian girl Zilia “knots up” love letters addressed to her lover Aza. Facing the incredulity of the Duchess of S****, who doubted that such complex letters could be “written” by means only of knots—or, better, using such incredulity as a literary pretext—De Sangro embarked on a defense of the khipu system. This pretext allowed him to show his competence on such an exotic matter: “I will show you, and I will let you touch with your hands, how wrongly you lashed out against the Quipus’ marvelous efficacy” (De Sangro 1750: 36).³ De Sangro then described a syllabic system in which the top section of every pendant cord of a khipu carries a master sign corresponding to a master word that the *khipukamayuc* or “khipu-keeper” knew by memory. The number of knots on the pendant cord indicates which syllable of the master word is to be read; if no knots are present, the whole master word is to be read. Using this system, of which all forty words are illustrated in a color plate accompanying the text (Plate 1; see Figure 1), De Sangro “knotted up” the Quechua text of an Inka song, *Sumac ñusta* (“Beautiful princess”), also recorded in Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Comentarios Reales de los Incas*. According to Garcilaso, the song originated from the lost work of Blas Valera, the enigmatic *mestizo* Jesuit whose life is so mysterious that Raúl Porras Barrenechea (1986: 462) nicknamed him the “ghost chronicler.”⁴ The khipu-knotted song, the reading of which is explained in the text of the *Lettera Apologetica*, is illustrated in a second color plate

³ “Io dunque vi farò vedere, e toccar fino con mano, quanto a torto vi siate scagliata contra la meravigliosa efficacia de’ *Quipu*” (De Sangro 1750: 36).

⁴ On the life of Blas Valera, see Hyland 2003.

(Plate 2; see Figure 2), while a third one (Plate 3) illustrates a quite eccentric alphabetic system of khipu knotting that De Sangro devised in order to transcribe the Latin alphabet (with different color patterns distinguishing among the Italian, Latin, French, Spanish, German, and English languages). In his opinion, this latter system could be useful for encoding secret messages concerning military or amorous matters ...

But how did De Sangro create his syllabic khipu system? Was it fabricated out of thin air, or was it built upon some documented basis? De Sangro explicitly describes his main sources: “Moreover, I want to let you know that all those Master Words that I will show you are taken from [Garcilaso de la Vega’s] *Ynca History*, with the exception of just seven of them, which I took from a special Manuscript luckily fallen into my hands by pure chance some years ago. Having arrived in Italy from Chile, the Jesuit P. Illanes, to whom it had been entrusted, and whom I had met, one day discussed with me the languages of these Indies; and he [...], with his unusual kindness, decided to donate to me the aforementioned Manuscript, which looks like a brief Grammar and a succinct small Vocabulary of the best Peruvian language, that is, the language once used by the Ynca. Who knows? Maybe, when you will least expect it, you will see that Manuscript published, accompanied by many reflections of such a kind that it will not appear to you as the most negligible thing of this World” (De Sangro 1750: 242).⁵

Despite this statement, and despite the fact that the Jesuit Pedro de Illanes is a historically documented individual (Santiago de Chile, 18/10/1695–Rome, 8/2/1746) whose return to Italy is an attested fact, the eccentricity of De Sangro’s work entailed that modern khipu specialists have devoted little attention to the *Lettera Apologetica*. At best, they considered his syllabic khipu system to be a mere *divertissement*, an ingenious but useless fruit of the volcanic De Sangro’s fancy and of

⁵ “E voglio in oltre, che sappiate, che tutte quelle *Parole Maestre*, che vi esporrò, son prese dalla Storia degl’*Ynca*, a riserva di sole sette, le quali sono state da me tratte da un particolar Manoscritto cadutomi fortunatamente nelle mani alcuni anni addietro per un puro caso. Venuto in Italia dal Chili il Gesuita P. *Illanes*, che n’era Procuratore, e contratta con esso lui conoscenza mi feci un giorno a ragionargli appunto sul proposito dell’Idioma di quelle Indie; ed egli [...] per una singolar finezza volle farmi dono del suddetto Manoscritto, che ha l’aria giustamente d’una breve Gramatica, e d’un succinto Vocabolario della miglior favella Peruana, cioè, di quella usata un tempo dagl’*Ynca*. Chi sa? forse quando meno ve l’aspettate, vedrete uscito alla luce questo Manoscritto, e da tante e tali riflessioni assistito, che non vi parrà la cosa più disprezzabile di questo Mondo” (De Sangro 1750: 241–42).

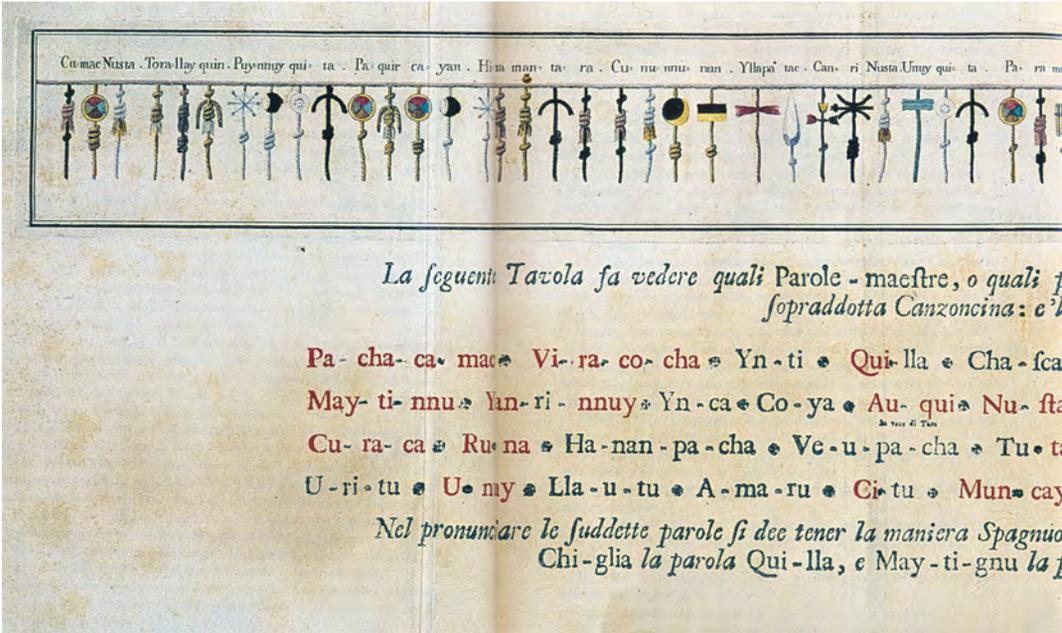


Fig. 2: Plate 2 of Raimondo de Sangro, *Lettera Apologetica*, representing the knotted song *Sumac ñusta*. The upper line of text bears the transcription of the song in Latin alphabet. Below the illustration appears a complete list of the forty master words

little interest for the purpose of decoding Inka khipus, which almost certainly were not of a syllabic nature. The “special Manuscript” would, then, be another of De Sangro’s literary pretexts.

Adopting De Sangro’s point of view, let us try to follow his footsteps in the process of inventing the syllabic khipu, in order to understand his working method and to examine whether his khipu system is completely self-sufficient and internally coherent.⁶

Assuming for the moment that the Naples documents are modern forgeries, let us imagine De Sangro trying to encode in syllabic knots Garcilaso’s *Sumac ñusta* text in the absence of any “special Manuscript.” First of all, why *Sumac ñusta*? Obviously, De Sangro was guided by Garcilaso’s

⁶ A couple of preliminary versions of the present analysis have been previously published (Domenici 2007a, 2007b). In the same volume as Domenici 2007b, the interested reader can find L. Laurecich Minelli’s critical response to my paper (Laurecich Minelli 2007). The present version, substantially improved and reaching new conclusions, is the most updated and complete.



of Plate 1, with red color indicating the syllables used in the transcription of the song. The sentence at the bottom states that Quechua words are to be read according to Spanish pronunciation rules.

statement about the song: “Father Blas Valera says that he found the story and its verses in the knots and accounts of some ancient annals that were in threads of different colors, and that the translation of the verses and of the story were given to him by the accounting Indians that were in charge of the knots and of the historical accounts.”⁷ This statement gave De Sangro some sort of “philological guarantee:” he would not simply be inventing, but rather “re-knotting” a text that had been once recorded by means of knotted khipu and later “translated” into an alphabetic text.

We do not know exactly which edition of the *Comentarios De Sangro* had at hand, but, since he clearly stated that it was a French text (De Sangro 1750: 203), he probably used an edition of Jean Baudoin’s

⁷ “La fábula y los versos dice el padre Blas Valera que halló en los nudos y cuentas de unos anales antiguos que estaban en hilos de diversos colores y que la traducción de los versos y de la fábula se la dijeron los indios contadores que tenían cargo de los nudos y cuentas historiales” (Garcilaso, *Comentarios*, II, 27).

French translation, first published in Paris in 1633. The same text was then republished three times in Amsterdam, and De Sangro probably used one of these Dutch editions.⁸ De Sangro would have read the Quechua text of the song, divided it into syllables,⁹ and created pictorial signs for useful corresponding Quechua “master words,” that is, Quechua words containing the same syllables he was trying to “knot up.” Since De Sangro did not know the Quechua language, he had to search for these words among those contained in Garcilaso’s work. Every time he created a pictorial sign, he would have it copied in his Plate 1 list of “master words”.

Let us, then, start with the song’s first syllable, that is, CU! Why did De Sangro knot up CU, in the form *CUraca*,¹⁰ if the song actually begins

⁸ *Le commentaire royal, ou L’histoire des Yncas, Roys du Peru*, trans. Jean Baudoin (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1633). The same translation, published as *Histoire des Yncas, rois du Perou...* was later republished in Amsterdam by G. Kuyper (1704), J. Desbordes (1715), and J. F. Bernard (1737). Since De Sangro cites the book only with the title *Histoire des Yncas*, it is unlikely that he had in his hands the first French edition of Baudoin’s translation, as well as the new French translation published in Paris in 1744 by Prault and titled *Histoire des Incas*. We suppose, then, that De Sangro had in his hands one of the Amsterdam editions; the comparison of copies of the 1704 and 1715 editions shows that they are almost identical (with the same page numbers). Since the 1715 edition contains a final “Table des matières” that could well have helped De Sangro in his search for Quechua master words, it is probable that he used a copy of this edition, the same one that we have used in the present analysis. For some details on European translations of the *Comentarios*, see Safier 2004, especially note 6. R. Tom Zuidema first drew my attention to the Dutch editions of Baudoin’s French text.

⁹ Ignoring the form of syllabic division in Quechua, De Sangro explicitly states that he divided the text following an intuitive, Italian-like, division (De Sangro 1750: 268–69). Anyway, a Jesuit report describing a 1570 Corpus Christi celebration in Huarochirí, states that the most noble Indians sang “lyrics, of four syllables each verse” deriving from ancient songs dedicated to the Sun and to the King (Egaña 1954: 425, cit. in Hyland 2003: 45). The *Sumac ñusta* song is also composed of four-syllable verses, thus pertaining to the same metrical category. We could therefore assume that Quechua-speakers used some form of syllabic division similar to the European one, at least as far as the number of syllables is concerned. De Sangro also uses a four-syllable verse in his Italian translation of the song (De Sangro 1750: 228). Speaking about the syllable division, De Sangro (1750: 268) states that although in Quechua “Y” equals a double “I”, when Y is preceded or followed by a vowel forming a mixed sound, it is not to be split in two syllables; he also says that he inferred this fact not only from Quechua verses, but also from Illanes’s manuscript (see below).

¹⁰ We follow De Sangro’s transcription convention: *CUraca* means that *curaca* is the complete master word, while the capitalized syllable CU is the one to be read (as indicated by a single knot on the cord).

with the syllable SU (*Su-mac*)? We cannot assume that he did not find a useful master word, since Plate 1 contains the word *Suri* (“ostrich”) that would have been perfect for his needs. The reason is easily found: De Sangro was reading an 18th-century printed edition of the *Comentarios* in which, as was then quite common, there were no diacritical signs. Ignoring Quechua, De Sangro was unable to conjecture that the letter C of *Cumac* (Garcilaso 1715, t. 1: 220) should have been a Ç, corresponding to the sound “S.” This is not an isolated case, and we will find other similar transcription mistakes, caused either by error or because of typographic conventions in Garcilaso’s Dutch edition: *Nusta* instead of *ñusta* (Garcilaso 1715, t. 1: 220), *Oello* instead of *Ocillo* (Garcilaso 1715, t. 1: 348), *Veumari* instead of *Ucumari* (Garcilaso 1715, t. 2: 327), *Veupacha* instead of *Ucu Pacha* (Garcilaso 1715, t. 1: 141). Strangely enough, De Sangro writes *Utucuncu* instead of the clearly readable *Ututuncu*¹¹ (Garcilaso 1715, t. 2: 328). In contrast, De Sangro perfectly understands that the “nn” used in Garcilaso’s edition corresponds to a “ñ,” as can be inferred from his own transcription of the *Sumac ñusta* text (De Sangro 1750: 228).

Despite the mentioned pitfalls due to typographic conventions, De Sangro managed to transcribe the entire seventy-six syllables of the song using sixty-four pendant cords and twenty-four different master words. Assuming that De Sangro created the pictorial master signs all on his own, using Quechua terms that he found in the *Comentarios*, we note an intriguing problem. Seven of the master words he uses do not appear in the *Comentarios* (*Catollay*, *Hipuy*, *Maytinnu* [*Maytiñu*], *Muncaynim*, *Pinunsun*, *Quinquir*, *Tacvehirac*); note that seven is precisely the number that De Sangro himself mentioned when stating that some words were not drawn from Garcilaso’s work but from the “special manuscript.” If this manuscript was simply a literary pretext, where did De Sangro (who ignored Quechua) find them?¹²

And why does Plate 1 list forty master signs/words if De Sangro only made use of twenty-four of them? The sixteen “unused” master words are: *Ynti*, *Chasca*, *Coyllur*, *Ynca*, *Coya*, *Oello* [*Ocillo*], *Mama Cora*, *Hanan pacha*, *Veupacha* [*Ucu pacha*], *Puma*, *Utucuncu* [*Uturuncu*], *Suri*, *Cuntur*, *Uritu*, *Llautu*, and *Amaru*. We can assume that *Ynca* and *Veupacha*

¹¹ *Uturuncu* in modern editions.

¹² Apparently, De Sangro had no other published sources of Quechua words: all his references to Pedro Cieza de León and José de Acosta are from passages cited in Garcilaso’s *Comentarios*.

(“King” and “Lower World,” both written following the orthography of Garcilaso’s Dutch edition), were created for reasons of “symmetry,” being represented beside their “counterparts” *Coya* (“Queen”) and *Hanan pacha* (“Upper World”). But why did De Sangro create many pictorial signs that he never used in his transcription?

The *Lettera Apologetica*’s khipu contains a still more problematic pictorial sign: transcribed as *Auqui* (“Prince”) in Plate 1, the same sign is used for the word *Tora* (“Brother”) in Plate 2. Why did De Sangro use that sign as *Tora* while copying it in Plate 1 as the sign for *Auqui*? In his text he provided a rather strange explanation: “I must tell you that where you will find the whole sign [i.e. without knots] *Auqui* (as at number 15 in Plate 1) you should there read the word *Tora*, the first word of the second verse of the song. The mentioned word *Tora* literally means Brother. Now, speaking to a *Nusta*, that is, to a Royal Daughter, and wanting to signify her brother, one couldn’t have used a more fitting word than the aforementioned whole sign meaning *Auqui*, that is, Royal Son” (De Sangro, 1750: 196).¹³ We can accept this strange explanation; but why did De Sangro not simply list the sign as *Tora* in his Plate 1? Moreover, why did De Sangro invent a totally unnecessary sign, given that he could have transcribed the word *Tora* using other master words that he used in other parts of the text, since he was obviously aware of them?¹⁴ Was it just for the sake of simplicity and due to a preference for whole words?

Interestingly, De Sangro uses the form “nn” in his color plates, and the form “ñ” in the song text and in the description of master words (De Sangro 1750: 228, 251). This strange inconsequence remains unexplained.

¹³ “Debbo quì avvertirvi, che laddove troverete l’intero segno significante *Auqui* (siccome nel número 15. della tavola prima) dovrete riconosceri registrata la voce *Tora*, che è la prima appunto del secondo versetto della Canzoncina. La suddetta voce *Tora* significa realmente *Fratello*. Or parlandosi ad una *Nusta*, cioè, ad una Figliuola Reale, e per ispiegare il Fratello di lei non potea usarsi più facile indizio, che quello del suddetto intero Segno dinotante *Auqui*; cioè Figliuolo Reale” (De Sangro 1750: 266).

¹⁴ Again, he gives us a quite strange explanation: “We should always prefer the whole *Master Signs* to the others, for the higher simplicity that comes with them. Moreover You can easily see that, if I would have liked, I could have well recorded the word *Tora* using the *TO* of *CaTOllay* and the *RA* of *ViRAcocha*, or of some other word.” “[...] sempre saran da stimarsi più l’espressioni indicate dagl’interi *Segni Maestri*, che non le altre, attesa la maggiore semplicità, che le accompagna. Del resto Voi vedete benissimo, che avrei potuto assai facilmente, volendolo, registrare la propria parola *Tora* col valermi del *TO* di *CaTOllay*, e del *RA* di *ViRAcocha*, o d’altra voce” (De Sangro 1750: 266–67). We will later return to this last statement concerning “some other word.”

In one single case, De Sangro “betrays” the text recorded by Garcilaso. The word *Yllapantac* (correctly copied by De Sangro in the alphabetic text he transcribed on page 228 of his work) is transcribed in Plate 2 as *Yllapatac*. De Sangro explains that the absence of the “n” is simply due to a common “minute truncation” (“picciolissimo troncamento:” De Sangro 1750: 267–68). The explanation is quite unsatisfactory, and the best guess is that he could not find in the *Comentarios* any Quechua word to correctly transcribe *Yllapantac* into a syllabic form.

For reasons that will be explained below, it is important to note here that, strictly following Baudoin’s edition (Garcilaso 1715, t. 1: 220), De Sangro transcribes the word *Torallayquin* using the master word *QUIN-quir*, while the more common Quechua form would be *Torallayquim*, as written in modern editions of Garcilaso.

Concerning the visual aspect of the master signs, we can assume that in the absence of any pictorial source, they were purely the fruit of De Sangro’s own invention, varying strangely and without any clear reason between round elements with different color patterns, and complex multiple knots with an iconographic appearance corresponding to specific classes such as celestial phenomena, human figures, quadrupeds, avians, miscellaneous items, etc.¹⁵

If we assume that De Sangro worked in accordance with the method described above, committing some reading errors and inventing himself all the visual aspect of the signs and their respective classes, we are still left with some inherent incongruities and unanswered questions:

- Why did he include various unnecessary master signs/words in his Plate 1?
- Why did he not include the master word *Tora* in Plate 1, rather than describe the same sign as *Auqui*? And why did he provide a quite complicated (and unnecessary) explanation for this last fact?
- Why did he transcribe the word *Utucuncu* instead of *Ututuncu* as it appears in the Dutch edition of Garcilaso?
- Why did he use both the “nn” and the “ñ” transcription forms?

¹⁵ Sabine Hyland (2002: 160–61; 2003: 141) first noted the existence of some of these classes in the *Lettera Apologetica* khipu as well as the presence of some Christian interpretation of Inka religion. This is the case with the Viracocha sign, formed by the coupling of the Pachacamac sign and of an anthropomorphic knot, as if Viracocha was signified in the form of a Christ-like human-god.

Finally and most importantly, from where did he take the seven Quechua master words not attested in the *Comentarios*? Does it have something to do with the seven words that he explicitly mentions as having been extracted from the “special Manuscript”?

The Naples Documents: Has the “Special Manuscript” Surfaced Again?

As mentioned above, in 1996 the world of Andean ethnohistory was shaken by the presentation by Laura Laurencich Minelli, Clara Miccinelli, and Carlo Animato of the first of the two so-called Naples documents (Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli and Animato 1995).¹⁶ The documents—purportedly written partly in the very hand of Blas Valera and partly by other fellow Jesuits—were allegedly found by Clara Miccinelli in her private house in Naples in 1984; parts of them were published in 1989 by Animato, Rossi and Miccinelli (1989) in an Italian non-academic book that received no attention at all from the scientific community. A detailed description of the Naples documents is well beyond the aim of this paper, and it can be found elsewhere (Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli and Animato 1995, 1998; Laurencich Minelli 2001, 2007; Domenici and Domenici 2003; Hyland 2003: 195–213), so I will limit myself here to a brief outline.

The first document, *Historia et Rudimenta Linguae Piruanorum* (referred to from here on as HR), is a small booklet containing texts and drawings in different hands, which are dated between the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 20th century. A first section, signed JAC with an incomplete dating,¹⁷ contains a faded and almost invisible drawing of the Sun and the Moon, a short Latin text describing some facts concerning the life of Father Blas Valera, his concept of similarities between Inka and Christian religions, a synthesis of

¹⁶ The presentation of the manuscripts and the publication of the article in *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* was in 1996, but the journal issue was pre-dated to 1995. Together with my father Viviano, a science journalist, I resumed the main steps of the debate in two articles (Domenici and Domenici 1996a; Domenici 2000) and in an Italian book (Domenici and Domenici 2003); in the bibliography of the latter, the reader can find the most relevant bibliographic references up to 2003. An important event in the scholarly debate was the international meeting ‘Guaman Poma y Blas Valera. Tradición Andina e Historia Colonial’, held in Rome on September 29th–30th, 1999 (Cantù, ed. 2001).

¹⁷ Unfortunately (and strangely enough), the precise date is missing because of a hole in the page; only “MD[...]” is left.

Quechua grammar, an explanation of a syllabic khipu system that is almost identical to De Sangro's, an example of a painted syllabic khipu containing the Quechua song *Ruru curipac* ("Golden egg") with glosses in the Latin alphabet, a translation by JAC of the *Ruru curipac* text, the text of a song celebrating Huayna Capac, the 11th Inka, and a list of fifty-six Quechua master words with the corresponding Spanish translations. In his Latin texts, JAC attributes most of the information to the native *curaca* Mayachac Azuay, who would have received it directly from Blas Valera. JAC also states that the condemnation of Blas Valera by the Jesuit order was not due to an affair with a woman, as stated by Jesuit authorities, but to his almost heretical interpretation of Inka religion, and his criticism of the violence of Spanish rule. As Hyland (1998) has been the first to observe, these biographical data are perfectly congruent with those found in various unpublished manuscripts which were unknown at the time of the first publication of *Historia et Rudimenta* (see below).

The second text (here called JAO1), dated July 31st, 1637, is a ciphered Italian text signed by JAO containing some surprising news. Besides confirming JAC's statements regarding Valera and his conception of the unity of religions, JAO1 writes about Valera's knowledge of khipu, the existence of khipu with colored symbols, an Inka history going back to the Asian region of Tartaria, strange observations concerning cultural practices such as clitoris slash and cranial deformation, and the use by Pizarro of poisoned wine in order to knock out the Inka generals in the Cajamarca battle. JAO1 also lists some "Inga hieroglyphs" similar to those employed by Guaman Poma, and states that a *khipukamayuc* called Chauarurac explained to him the meaning of a fragment of a woolen syllabic khipu, which JAO had found in 1627 in a *waka* in a place called Acatanga.¹⁸ A fragment of a woven syllabic khipu, annexed to the manuscript, in fact contains part of the *Sumac ñusta* song in syllabic form, a song that, as JAO explains, would have been "concealed" also in the famous so-called "*abacus*" drawn beside a *khipukamayuc* on p. 360 [362] of the *Nueva corónica*.

A third text, again an Italian ciphered text by JAO (here called JAO2), dated April 25th, 1638, adds more surprising news. It states that Blas Valera did not die in 1597, but lived secretly "as dead" in Spain and went back to Peru, where he and Gonzalo Ruíz wrote and illustrated

¹⁸ See Zuidema 2001:377 for a critical analysis of the name Acatanga.

the *Nueva corónica*, attributing the authorship to Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, who had agreed to play the role of “dummy author.” To this second intervention on the document, JAO supposedly also annexed three smaller sheets of paper signed by Blas Valera containing a painted syllabic khipu of the *Sumac ñusta* song; some ciphered glosses over and under the master signs explaining their corresponding Quechua words seem to have been added by JAO himself.

A fourth text, written in Spanish, signed “Petrus de Illanes JHS,” and dated 1737, states that this Jesuit received the manuscript from the hands of a dying Chilean Indian he was confessing.

A fifth text, again in Italian, signed by Duke Amedeo of Aosta and dated November 11th, 1927, is a dedication addressed to Clara Miccinelli’s maternal uncle.

Some years after the publication of *Historia et Rudimenta*,¹⁹ a second manuscript was published. It is entitled *Exsul Immeritus Blas Valera Populo Suo* (referred to from here on as EI) and dated May 10th, 1618. This complex and colorful document, purportedly in the hand of Blas Valera himself, includes a lengthy Latin text dealing with Valera’s biography, Inka history and religion, Spanish conquest, Quechua grammar, and many other issues. Most interesting in our context, the document contains a huge amount of painted syllabic khipu transcribing Quechua songs, a group of account-khipu, as well as an example of a calendar-khipu (Zuidema 2004) and of a “ceques”-khipu (Zuidema 2007). The document also has a huge bulk of textual “annexes” including a letter supposedly written by the conquistador Francisco de Chaves, a fragment of a handwritten letter signed by Christopher Columbus, and a series of objects including some examples of woven and metallic “master signs” (the text denotes them with the Quechua word *ticcisimi*).

To conclude this brief outline, we should remember that a document apparently related to the Naples documents was found by Maurizio Gnerre in the Archivium Romanum Societatis Jesu (ARSI) in Rome (Gnerre 2001), and another by Francesca Cantù in the State Archives of Naples (ASN) (Cantù 2001).²⁰

¹⁹ We should remark here that in their 1989 book, Miccinelli, Rossi, and Animato only described the JAC, JAO1, Illanes, and Duke of Aosta’s texts, together with the painted khipu and the related khipu fragment, making no mention at all of the JAO2 text, first published only in the 1995 article.

²⁰ In a personal communication (July 2015) regarding the manuscript and the printed sources that supposedly confirm the authenticity of the Naples documents, Ivan

Let us assume that the Naples documents, or parts of them, are authentic, and examine their possible role in De Sangro's knotting project. Since the Naples documents—particularly HR—were the product of different hands writing at different times, and hypothetically assuming that a single document could be a mixture of authentic and forged parts, we will proceed in our analysis considering every section of the Naples documents (JAC, JAO, EI) as a separate unit.²¹

JAC as the “Special Manuscript”

Despite the fact that the painted khipu of *Sumac ñusta* was allegedly added by JAO to the HR manuscript, and would seem at first glance to be the direct source of De Sangro's work, we will first consider the hypothesis that only JAC's text and its related drawings (JAC from now on)—that is, the earliest of all the HR texts—correspond to the “special Manuscript” of De Sangro. JAC extends over fols. 2, 8, and 9 of the document and once formed an independent brief document on the blank pages of which the texts of JAO1, Illanes, and the Duke of Aosta were later added; JAO2 was written on several additional folios.

As previously mentioned, besides an explanation of the syllabic khipu system, JAC includes a list of fifty-six Quechua master words with their

Boserup has stated that, in his opinion, the ARSI and ASN documents published by Gnerre (2001) and Cantù (2001), respectively, together with HR-JAC (as I have argued since 2007), and possibly other authentic but equivocal sources that have not yet been identified, may have stimulated the fantasy and creativity of the author of the modern fictitious “Blas Valera novel,” as manifested in HR-JAO and EI as well as in secondary forgeries such as the “Contract” discovered in 1998 and the Chaves drawing of the ASN. Boserup also suggests that the undoubtedly authentic printed sources adduced by Cantù (2003), which the forger without any doubt knew quite well, have defined the limits within which the Naples documents were created or corrupted (made more “interesting”) from some material that Clara Miccinelli had inherited from her maternal uncle Major Riccardo Cera (etc., going back to the collector Emilio di Tommasi, Naples 1899)—material which has been shown to diverse scholars over the years, and was finally edited by Laurencich Minelli (2007), so that these printed sources could likewise “confirm” the authenticity of the primary Naples forgeries. Regarding the “Contract”, see Boserup and Krabbe Meyer 2015; regarding the Chaves letter, see Boserup 2015 [This volume].

²¹ I had one single opportunity of briefly seeing the Naples Documents in 1996; since any access to the manuscripts is today prohibited by the owner, the present analysis was carried out on photos taken by Viviano Domenici and published in two articles and one book (Domenici and Domenici 1996, 2003; Domenici 2000).

respective Spanish translation.²² I would like to stress here three aspects of this list. Firstly, it follows a Latin alphabetical order in which V and U are the same letter, as was quite common in manuscripts and publications of the 16th to 18th centuries. Secondly, the list contains the word *Veumari*:²³ this is quite strange, since *Veumari* is not a simple allo-

²² As the list of master words has been published several times using different transcriptions, it is useful to repeat it here in a form checked against photographs of the manuscript:

Allapachamasca, tierra animada	Muncaynim, siringa
Amaru, serpiente	Nusta, princesa
Auqui, señor	Ocillo [Oello?], la primera princesa
Cantut, flor	Pachacamac, Hazedor, Ser Supremo
Catollay, luto	Pinunsun, equinoccio
Cayana, llamar	Puma, leon americano
Chacata, cruz	Punchi, dia
Chasca, Venus	Quilla, luna
Chillca, arbusto medicamentoso	Quillayuncay, luna llena
Chiraoca, verano	Quillachuncay, la conjuncion
Citu (Citua Raymi), solemnidad del Sol	Quipu, nudo
Corequenque, fenix	Quinquir, harapo
Coya, princesa	Runa, hombre, indio
Coyllur, estrella	Sinchi Roca, Principe cuerdo y valiente
Cuntur, condor	Suri, nandu
Cuychu, arco iris	Tacvehirac, honda
Hananpacha, cielo	Tucuiricu, el que ve todo
Hipuy, cometa	Tuta, noche
Huaman, aguilá pescadora	Veumari, orso
Huasca, cuerda	Viracochoa, Dios encarnado
Llamanichec, pastor	Unu, Unuy, agua
Llautu, diadema	Uritu, papagayo
Maitinu, eclipse solar	Uturuncu, tigre
Mama Cora, Mama Cora	Yanrinuy, eclipse lunar
Mama Cuna, madrastra,	Yllapa, rayo
Manco Capac, Manco Capac	Ynti, Sol
Maqui, mano	Zancu, pan
Marucha, Ninfa	Zupay, diablo

²³ The word was transcribed as *Ucumari* in Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli and Animato 1995, then correctly transcribed as *Veumari* in Laurencich 1996: 61, and then again erroneously transcribed as *Ucumari* in Laurencich Minelli 2007: 546. In a previous publication (Domenici 2007: 10, note 27), I erroneously argued that Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli and Animato's transcription of the word *Viracochoa* was wrong and it should have been *Uiracochoa*, corresponding to the alphabetical list order *Ucumari*, *Uiracochoa*, *Unu*. After close inspection of the photo of the manuscript, I am now convinced that the list goes this way: *Veumari*, *Viracochoa*, *Unu*.



Fig. 3: The *Ruru curipac* painted syllabic khipu in JAC's section of *Historia et Rudimenta Linguae Piruanorum* (after Domenici 2000).

morph of the correct Quechua word *Ucumari* (“bear”) but, rather, an erroneous typographic form introduced since the first printed edition of Garcilaso’s *Comentarios* (Garcilaso 1609: 216), and then replicated for centuries in subsequent editions. Third, the list uses the form “n” to transcribe the sound “ñ.”

As we said before, JAC includes a painted and glossed syllabic khipu containing the song *Ruru curipac* “deciphered” by JAC, see Figure 3. JAC himself states that the *curaca* Mayachac Azuay, who personally knew Blas Valera, donated some drawings of his to JAC, on some of which the latter wrote the explanations kindly dictated to him by the *curaca* (*Hac ratione Curaca mihi picturas suas donavit [et] quibusdam earum definitiones addidi quas comiter ipse mihi dictavit*). In fact, while the Sun and Moon drawing has no glosses, the *Ruru curipac* khipu²⁴ is glossed in JAC’s hand.

²⁴ The best photograph of *Ruru curipac* khipu is the one published in Domenici 2000: 50.

I want to stress here an important aspect that has not been observed by previous commentators of the documents: the painted khipu, see Figure 3, includes one master sign which is almost completely faded, but can still clearly be seen on the right side of the page (above the *Pachacamac* sign); JAC's glosses ignore the faded master sign, as if it were already faded when JAC glossed the drawing. Close observation of the khipu also shows another characteristic not previously noted: blank spaces in the sequence separate the different words of the song, so that the position of the faded master sign indicates that the sign transcribed the last part of the word beginning with *Ynti*, probably a case marker. Here follows a complete transcription of the khipu, with slashes separating whole words:

amaRU + RUNa / CURaca + yanRInnuuy + manco caPAC / YNTI + (faded sign) /
 QUILLA / COYLLUR + uturunCU + ruNA + tuTA / PACHACAMAC /
 suRI + veuMARI + CURaca + ruNA + MANco capac.

Written with the Latin alphabet, the text would be:

Ruru curipac Ynti(...) Quilla Coyllurcunata Pachacamac rimacunaman.

To transcribe this text, the khipu painter used fourteen master words; twelve of them (*Amaru*, *Runa*, *Yanrinnuy*, *Manco Capac*, *Ynti*, *Quilla*, *Coyllur*, *Uturuncu*, *Tuta*, *Pachacamac*, *Suri*, *Veumari*) are glossed and listed in JAC's list of master words, except *Curaca* and the faded sign. Note that in his glosses JAC uses the form *nn* for ñ; again, the glosses contain the form *Veumari*.

Let us now compare this text with the alphabetic one that JAC wrote under the drawing: *Ruru curipac Ynti Quilla Coyllircuna Pachacamac rimacunaman ...*, translated by JAC as "*Huevo de oro Sol Luna Estrellas Hazedor del cielo y tierra esta hablando ...*".²⁵ We can observe some interesting particularities. Firstly, JAC's text strictly follows his glosses, ignoring the faded sign, which means that he was literally transcribing the khipu and not writing a song he knew by memory. Secondly, he forgot to read the

²⁵ "Golden egg Sun Moon Stars Creator of sky and earth is speaking...". The alphabetic song text, which as far as we know is not attested in any other colonial source, goes on over several lines that have no counterpart in the painted khipu.

master word *tuTA*, and, thirdly, he transcribed *Coyllir* rather than *Coyllur*, transforming *Coyllurcunata* into *Coyllircuna*, and thus changing both the text, the grammar, and the meter.

Let us assume De Sangro's point of view again, trying to "knot up" the Quechua text of *Sumac ñusta* and including JAC among his sources. Only eight of JAC's thirteen readable master signs would have been useful (*Runa*, *Curaca*, *Yanrinnuy*,²⁶ *Manco Capac*, *Quilla*, *Tuta*, *Pachacamac*, and *Veumari*), and De Sangro actually used (Plate 2) and copied them (Plate 1). On the contrary, the other five master signs (*Amaru*, *Ynti*, *Coyllur*, *Uturuncu*, and *Suri*) were of no use to him, but he copied them anyway in Plate 1; a misreading of JAC's gloss explains why De Sangro chose the form *Utucuncu* instead of the form *Ututuncu* attested in Garcilaso's text, thus indicating that De Sangro gave primacy to his manuscript source. The use by De Sangro of the form *Yanrinnuy* in his color plates instead of *Yanrinui* (as written in JAC's list), or *Yanriñuy* (as De Sangro could have easily and more clearly transcribed), shows that among his manuscript sources he gave primacy to the *Ruru curipac* glossed khipu, thus explaining his already noted strange variation between transcription forms.

To complete his transcription, De Sangro would have needed to create fifteen more pictorial master signs for the following master words: *Viracocha*, *Hipuy*, *Cuychu*, *Yllapa*, *Pinunsun*, *Mayinnu*, *Nusta*, *Sinchi Roca*, *Unuy*, *Citu*, *Muncaynim*, *Catollay*, *Quinquir*, *Cantut*, and *Tacvehirac*. Only eight of these words appear in Garcilaso's *Comentarios* (*Viracocha*, *Cuychu*, *Yllapa*, *Nusta*, *Sinchi Roca*, *Unuy*, *Citu*, *Cantut*), while all of them are included in JAC's list, and seven of them only appear in JAC's list. This fact explains well the provenance of these seven words, which remained unexplained in our previous internal analysis of the *Lettera Apologetica*. Obviously, they would be those "exceptions" referred to by De Sangro when he wrote the otherwise unexplainable phrase stating that all the master words were taken from Garcilaso's work, "with the exception of seven of them."

So, following this line of reasoning, De Sangro was able to transcribe the entire song *only* using words attested in JAC's list (except *Curaca*,

²⁶ The form *yanRInnuy* read in *Ruru curipac*, where it is transcribed with a cord with two knots, could well be the origin of De Sangro's statement concerning the fact that a Y followed by a vowel form a single syllable, saying that "in this way it is divided also in Illanes' Manuscript that I mentioned before" ("per tale lo dà a dividere altresì il manoscritto del P. Illanes, di cui vi ho sopra già fatta parola;" De Sangro 1750: 268).

anyway present in JAC's *Ruru curipac* khipu), that is, using only words of which the ancient usage as master words was confirmed by the "special Manuscript." In the case of *Yllapantac*, De Sangro could not find any useful word in JAC's list and so transcribed the word in the form *Yllapatac*, and then provided his explanation of the "small cut." In fact, De Sangro also invented the additional master word *Tora*: since the word was absent from JAC's manuscript, he did not create a new sign but rather used the sign *Auqui* (seen in *Ruru curipac*, but not useful for De Sangro with its proper meaning), giving the strange explanation mentioned above.²⁷ The fact that he included the sign in Plate 1 as *Auqui* implies that De Sangro was following some sort of "philological rule" that required him to include in Plate 1 only words that were attested in JAC's manuscript, that is, words that his documentary source confirmed were used in real syllabic khipu. Following the same principle, he also copied the word *Curaca* which, although absent from JAC's list, was used in the *Ruru curipac* khipu and thus attested by his source as being of ancient usage.

De Sangro was apparently following the same rule when he also included in Plate 1 eleven other master words not used in his Plate 2 (*Chasca*, *Ynca*, *Coya*, *Oello* [*Ocillo*], *Mama Cora*, *Hanan pacha*, *Veü pacha* [*Ucu pacha*], *Puma*, *Cuntur*, *Uritu*, *Llautu*). While *Veü pacha* [*Ucu pacha*] and *Ynca* (both read in Garcilaso's work and absent from JAC's list) were invented for the sake of "symmetry," as argued above, the other nine words are all present in JAC's list.

But why did De Sangro select only these nine "unused" master words from JAC's list, ignoring the extant nineteen "unused" master words in the same list? Apparently, De Sangro decided to ignore all the master words that were not confirmed by the *Comentarios* (with the exception of the seven above-mentioned words which he absolutely needed for his transcription). So, he discarded the following seven words: *Cayana*, *Chacata*, *Chiraoca*,²⁸ *Marucha*, *Punchi*, *Quillayuncay*, and *Quillachuncay*. He also discarded seven other words in JAC's list, of no use for his transcription but mentioned in the *Comentarios*: their usage in JAC's list appeared to him to be different, in orthography or meaning, from their counter-

²⁷ We do not know the reason for this unnecessary creation of the master word *tora*, but Daniele Vanoli (Vanoli 2004–2005) has suggested that it could have been an allusion to De Sangro's participation in freemasonry, where the word "brother" was used to indicate an affiliate.

²⁸ Wrongly transcribed as *Chiroca* in Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli, and Animato 1995.

parts in Garcilaso's work. These words are: *Allapachamasca* (written as *Alpacamasca*²⁹ in Garcilaso 1715, t. 1: 140), *Corequenque* (*Coraquenque*, t. 2: 104–6), *Huaman* (*Huama*, t. 2: 332), *Llamanichec* (*Llamamicher*, t. 1: 367, and *Llama Michec*, t. 2: 317); *Tucuiricu* (*Cucuy Ricoc*,³⁰ t. 1: 172); *Zancu* (*Cancu*, t. 1: 339) and *Zupay* (*Cupay*, t. 1: 116).

We still end up with five words appearing in JAC's list, written with the same orthography as in Dutch editions of Garcilaso, but nevertheless discarded by De Sangro: *Chilca* (cfr. Garcilaso 1715, t. 1: 209, 415, t. 2: 109), *Huasca* (t. 2: 367), *Mama Cuna* (t. 1: 104, 334, 336, 345; t. 2: 386, appearing both as *Mamacuna* and as *Mama Cuna*),³¹ *Maqui* (t. 1: 133), and *Quipu* (t. 2: 24, 29, 30, 32, 36). I cannot find any reason for their exclusion from Plate 1 and, admittedly, the exclusion of *Quipu* is quite surprising.

Anyway, De Sangro was perfectly conscious that, due to his selective approach, Plate 1 did not contain a complete list of the ancient master words, as he twice stated (De Sangro 1750: 246, 262). He was also conscious that any variation in orthography of the master words would have jeopardized the functioning of the whole syllabic system, as also shown by his preference for the form “nn” in his plates.

Obviously, De Sangro's “philological commitment” to JAC's manuscript comprised the master words, but not the pictorial master signs. The paucity of pictorial signs in *Ruru curipac* forced him to create many new signs for the master words in JAC's list, as he candidly stated (De Sangro 1750: 241; see below). But in this effort, De Sangro was again quite strict. He acutely observed that the *Ruru curipac* master signs were not randomly shaped. Names of gods and of some celestial phenomena were represented by non-iconographic signs with a specific color pattern (only in the case of *Coyllur*, “star,” is the color pattern contained in the star-like sign). The extant signs were represented by complex, iconographic knots referring to classes such as humans, four-legged animals, avians, serpents, and celestial phenomena, with different colors signifying different species within the same class. Again showing remarkable “philological consciousness,” De Sangro adhered strictly to these principles when he himself created signs, often basing his inventions on data drawn from Garcilaso's *Comentarios*. Here are some

²⁹ *Allpacamasca* in modern editions.

³⁰ *Tucuy ricoc* in modern editions.

³¹ In the “Table des matières” of the 1715 edition, the word is wrongly written *Mamac Cuna*; maybe this is the reason why De Sangro discarded it.

examples: when he faced the need for a pictorial sign for the master word *Quinquir* (“rag”) he drew an anthropomorphic knot of the color indicating *Auqui* (“Prince”) with an additional brownish thread on the “shoulders,” obviously inspired by Garcilaso’s description of the initiation ceremony of a prince dressed in rags (Garcilaso, *Comentarios*. VI: 26–27). When inventing the sign for *Citua*, translated by JAC as “(*Citua Raymi*), solemnidad del Sol,” De Sangro drew a black llama with red tassels and four knots, inspired by an erroneous reading of Garcilaso’s description of the *Inti Raymi* feast (De Sangro 1750: 259–60; Garcilaso, *Comentarios*, VI, 20–21).³²

Apparently, there is a main difference between De Sangro’s round signs and the rectangular signs in *Ruru curipac*, but if at first glance some master signs in *Ruru curipac* appear to be rectangular, a closer look at the photographs reveals that the borders of the rectangular signs were painted on top of signs that were originally round in shape, at least the signs corresponding to *Yanrinnuy*, *Quilla*, *Ynti*, and *Pachacamac*. Although some of these repaintings could be assigned to JAC himself, physico-chemical analysis carried out on the document have shown that at least some of them (both in the Sun and Moon drawing on HR folio 3v, and on the *Ruru curipac* khipu on folio 9r) were made with titanium dioxide (TiO₂), an artificial color and a common industrial whitener) produced only after 1870 (Bertoluzza, Fagnano, Rossi and Tinti, 2001). This evidence has been interpreted by some modern scholars as a proof of forgery. Much to the contrary, I see this evidence as a material correlate of the “long life” of the document, repainted by someone who did not take care not to use modern materials, in contrast to how a careful forger would act (see below).

Modern commentators of HR never noticed that the signs in *Ruru curipac* were originally round in shape, probably because all signs in the other painted khipu of the Naples documents are rectangular. They then interpreted the round signs in the *Lettera Apologetica* as simple variations introduced by De Sangro. On the contrary, it seems clear that De Sangro

³² De Sangro misunderstood Garcilaso’s mention of *Citua* (concerning the preparation of the *zancu* bread) in the midst of his description of *Inti Raymi* (Garcilaso, *Comentarios*, VI, 20–21), arguing that the black llama sacrifice was performed during the *Citua Raymi* ceremony, while Garcilaso states that it was performed during *Inti Raymi*. Garcilaso himself was actually in error and his description of *Inti Raymi* seems to be a mixture of various ceremonies: the black llama was, in fact, sacrificed during *Capac Raymi* (Zuidema 1992).

observed the round signs containing color patterns in *Ruru curipac*, and, in keeping with his “philological rules,” created his new signs using the shape that he had perceived was authentic.

The visual features of *Ruru curipac* apparently sparked two other aspects of De Sangro’s painted khipu: the left to right reading order, for which De Sangro gave a strange explanation based on the position of the hands of the *khipukamayuc* (De Sangro 1750: 239–40), and the spatial separation between words, which De Sangro transformed into a spatial separation between verses.

In my view, JAC, coupled with the typographic features of the 1715 Dutch edition of the *Comentarios*, constitutes a documentary source with a strong potential to explain De Sangro’s work. JAC not only contains the basic explanation of the syllabic khipu system and its formal features (reading order, spatial separations, etc.), but also allows for an understanding of a series of otherwise unexplainable facts, such as: the presence of unused master words in De Sangro’s Plate I; the almost complete set of criteria for the selection of its forty master words; the usage of *Utucuncu* instead of the wrong form *Ututuncu*; the variation between the “nn” and “ñ” forms; the substitution of *Tora* for *Auqui* in Plate I; the statement concerning the provenance of the seven master words; the statement regarding the “special Manuscript” providing a clue on the Y+vowel syllables; the original circular shape of his pictorial master signs; and the iconographic classes of his complex knots.

Finally, let us imagine for a moment that JAC were the product of a post-1750 forger trying to “mimic” the lost—or even unreal—“special Manuscript” of De Sangro. Besides imagining an ingenious forger, well trained in Quechua, capable of reproducing organic colorants, and of imagining a fake document with quite complex and indirect relations to the *Lettera Apologetica*, we should also answer the following questions:

- Why did he decide to “knot up” the previously unknown song *Ruru curipac*?
- Why did he also paint the faded master sign, without gloss, in his khipu?
- Why did he transcribe the text following the glosses and ignore the faded sign?
- Why did he write a much longer text of *Ruru curipac*, also eliminating the *tuTA* syllable?

- Why did he paint round master signs, later repainting them in a square form?
- Why, after having painted the manuscript(s) without modern colorants did he repaint some master signs with a modern white paint (TiO₂), easy to identify by scientific analysis? And why did he also add inverted commas with a modern blue ink to the word “Jerusalem” in the comment of Illanes (see below) on the same paper sheets?
- Why did he set up so long a list of master words, including totally unnecessary words?
- Why did he use the erroneous form *Veumari*, so obviously linked to specific typographic habits?
- Why did he introduce in the list of master words such unusual and erroneous orthographies as *Allapachamasca*, *Chiroaca*, or *Llamanichec*?
- Why did he use two different conventions to transcribe “ñ” and “nn” in the glosses of *Ruru curipac*, and a simple “n” in the master word list?
- How could he include in JAC information about Blas Valera’s imprisonment that was unknown before Hyland’s recent study of unpublished independent sources?

And finally, if the forger took part in the first publication of such a modern manuscript, why was it not accompanied by a description of the faded master sign, the originally round form of the signs, and JAC’s transcription errors in his *Ruru curipac* text? Why was *Veumari* “wrongly” transcribed as *Ucumari* in the first published transcription of the documents?

The difficulties raised by these questions, the general congruence of the relations between JAC and the *Lettera Apologetica*, as well as the correspondences between JAC and other unpublished sources, which were first noted by Hyland (1998), form a body of hard evidence. This evidence strongly suggests that JAC—which actually looks very much like “a brief Grammar and a succinct small Vocabulary of the best Peruvian language,” as De Sangro himself described it—is in fact a pre-1750 manuscript, in all evidence the “special Manuscript” used by De Sangro as the main source of the khipu system of the *Lettera Apologetica*.

But, why did De Sangro not mention in his *Lettera Apologetica* the drawings contained in the “special Manuscript”? A possible reason can

be sought in the fact that De Sangro is clearly presenting his khipu description as a personal act of decipherment, explicitly describing it as more demanding than those made by intellectuals such as Athanasius Kircher in relation to Egyptian hieroglyphs (De Sangro 1750: 198–99). We can also guess that he was saving his decisive evidence for another work, a work to which he alluded when stating that maybe one day the Duchess of S*** would see the Manuscript published.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that some other questions still remain that do not have a clear answer:

- Why did De Sangro discard from his Plate 1 the master words *Chillca*, *Huasca*, *Mama Cuna*, *Maqui*, and *Quipu*?
- Why does the form *Veumari*, deriving from printed editions of Garcilaso's *Commentarios*, appear in JAC's list of master words? We will comment further on this issue below, in the concluding section of the present article.

JAO's Texts and the Sumac ñusta Khipu

Let us now imagine that the whole *Historia et Rudimenta* booklet, including not only JAC's but also JAO's sections, constituted the "special Manuscript" in the hands of Raimondo de Sangro. The main khipu-related sections of JAO are the *Sumac ñusta* khipu allegedly painted by Blas Valera (referred to from hereafter as Valera-JAO), the woolen khipu fragment,³³ and a copy of the well known drawing of the *khipukamayoc* of *Nueva corónica* p. 360 [362], see Figure 4, which includes the *abacus* in which the *Sumac ñusta* song was allegedly "concealed."

If De Sangro had had Valera-JAO's painted *Sumac ñusta* khipu in his hands, it would obviously have been his main and direct source, a source that he could have copied without more ado. Nevertheless, a closer comparison between De Sangro's and Valera-JAO's painted *Sumac ñusta* khipu reveals various interesting differences.

Valera-JAO's painted khipu transcribes a much shorter version of the song, almost identical to the one supposedly "concealed" in the

³³ I include in this group the painted khipu because of the glosses written by JAO, as well as the woolen fragment because it reproduces exactly a part of the painted khipu, indicating their close relationship.

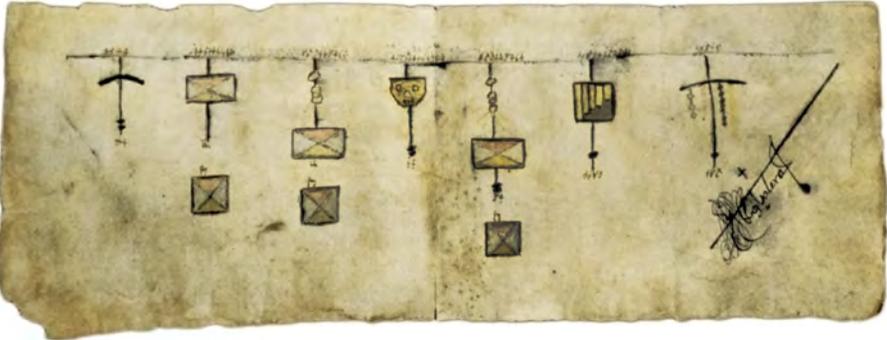
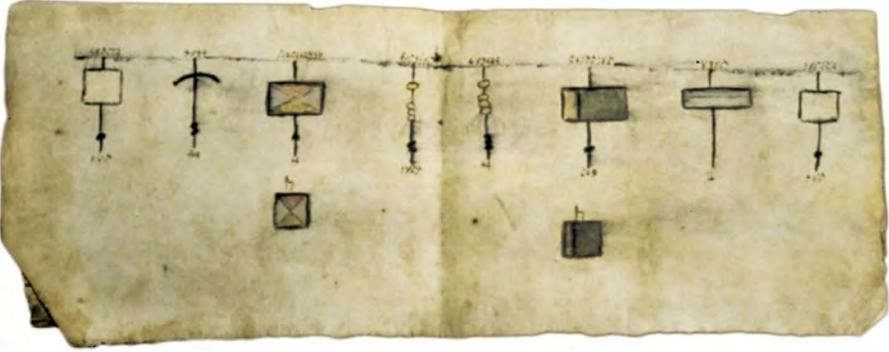


Fig. 4a-c: The three half-folios of the painted khipu of Valera-JAO with Blas Valera's alleged signature on the lower right corner of the third folio. On top of every master sign, a ciphered gloss spells out the corresponding master word, while below each sign is inscribed the syllable of the ciphered gloss to be read, as indicated by the number of knots below the master sign. The transcription would be: SUri pachacaMAC ÑUSTA caTOLLay cuRAca catoLLAY QUINquir hiPUY yanriNUY | QUIlla tuTA PAchacamac quinQUIR curaCA YANrinuy UNUY QUIlla | tuTA PACHACAMAC VIRACOCCHA alIPacamasca viRAcocha MUNcaynim QUIpu. Corresponding to the text: *sumac ñusta torallayquin | puynuyquita paquir cayan | unuy quita pachacamac | viracocha paramunqui* (after Domenici 2000).

abacus (discussed below), with some phrases in an inverted order.³⁴ This difference is quite surprising: if De Sangro used it as a source, we must imagine that he decided to transcribe the song in the form he found in Garcilaso, thus for the first time going against his own “philological rule,” according to which he would give primacy to manuscript sources. On the other hand, we could interpret the difference as a reflection of a modern forger’s need to adjust the song text to the *abacus* structure, where the number of master words (black dots) was strictly determined by Guaman Poma’s original drawing (see below).

Another surprising aspect is that Valera-JAO’s painted khipu uses only master words mentioned in JAC’s manuscript. Since Valera is not supposed to have seen JAC’s manuscript, one possible explanation could be that the list of master words was so precisely defined and standardized that Valera-JAO and JAC would use exactly the same master words. This hypothesis is hardly viable, since the list lacks various syllables, so that a khipu-keeper would soon have found himself in problems, exactly as De Sangro when facing the need of transcribing the syllable *NTAC*. More plausibly, a modern forger using JAC’s manuscript could have used its list to paint his fake khipu.

³⁴ We transcribe here the text as printed in Baudoin’s French translation (left column), the text published in the *Lettera Apologetica* and the phonetic transcription that De Sangro published following Italian pronunciation conventions (two middle columns), and the text as transcribed in the Valera-JAO painted khipu (right column).

Cumac Nusta	Cumac Nusta	Cumac Nusta	sumac nusta
Torallayquin	Torallay quin	Toragliay chin	torallayquin
Puynnuy quita	Puyñuy quita	Puignuy chita	puyñuyquita
Paquir Cayan	Paquir cayan	Pachir cayan	paquir cayan
Hina mantara	Hina mantara	Hina mantara	unuy quita
Cununnunun	Cunuñunun	Cunugnunun	pachacamac
Yllapantac	Yllapantac	Ygliapantac	viracocha
Canri Nusta	Canri Nusta	Canri Nusta	paramunqui
Unuy quita	Unuy quita	Unuy chita	
Para munqui	Para munqui	Para munchi	
May nimpiri	May nimpiri	May nimpiri	
Chici munqui	Chici munqui	Cisi munchi	
Riti munqui	Riti munqui	Riti munchi	
Pacha rurac	Pacha rurac	Pacia rurac	
Pachacamac	Pachacamac	Paciacamac	
Viracocha	Viracocha	Biracocia	
Cayhinapac	Cayhinapac	Cayhinapac	
Churasunqui	Chura sunqui	Ciura sunchi	
Camasunqui	Cama sunchi	Cama sunchi	

Strangely enough, Valera-JAO's khipu does not present any regular separation between words or verses, a feature that De Sangro would probably have copied if he had used Valera-JAO's khipu as his main source.

Other differences concern De Sangro's Quechua errors: as we would expect, Valera-JAO's painted khipu transcribes the first word as *Sumac* instead of *Cumac*. This could mean that the khipu was painted by someone who had some knowledge of Quechua or, on the contrary, that a modern forger "corrected" De Sangro's errors when fabricating a "real" Quechua manuscript.

A meticulous forger would have done it ... but, apparently, he was not so meticulous. Valera-JAO's painted khipu, the woolen khipu, and the *abacus* khipu, all contain the form *torallayquin* (transcribing the last syllable as *QUINquir* using the iconographic knot of the "rag" both on the painted and the woolen khipu), a form that, as we already know, originated in Baudoin's edition and was later replicated by De Sangro. Apparently, the forger did not recognize this problem until it was too late.³⁵

Concerning the word *Cumac/Sumac*, when De Sangro stated that he ignored the original Quechua type of syllabic division, he took precisely this word as an example, imagining a possible objection: "Where I partitioned *Cu-mac*, they could have done *Cum-ac*. I easily concede it and I say that in doing the mentioned partitioning I naturally based myself on the usage common in our verses" (De Sangro 1750: 269).³⁶ If he had in his hands Valera-JAO's painted *Sumac ñusta* khipu he would obviously have seen there the original form of syllabic division (*Cu-mac*), thus rendering the abovementioned statement unnecessary and out of place.

A similar consideration concerns the visual appearance of the master signs: if De Sangro used Valera-JAO's khipu, we must admit that he would have copied from this source its master signs. Why, then, did he write that "I cannot swear that the mentioned signs were really used, as I present them to you, by the Peruvian *Amauta* [wise man], and *Haravec*

³⁵ The first published transcriptions of Valera's khipu and of JAO's *abacus* contained the form *torallayquin*, as the ciphered glosses also confirm. In later transcriptions (e.g. Laurencich Minelli 2007), they were corrected in *torallayquim* on the basis of a "correcting note" in the *Exsul Immeritus* manuscript. We will come back later to this quite bold note, supposedly written *before* JAO's text.

³⁶ "Iaddove io ho partito *Cu-mac*, avessero essi fatto *Cum-ac*. Io ve lo concedo volentieri, e vi dico, che nel fare il suddetto scompartimento mi son regolato, siccome era naturale, col costume da noi tenuto ne' nostri metri" (De Sangro 1750: 269).

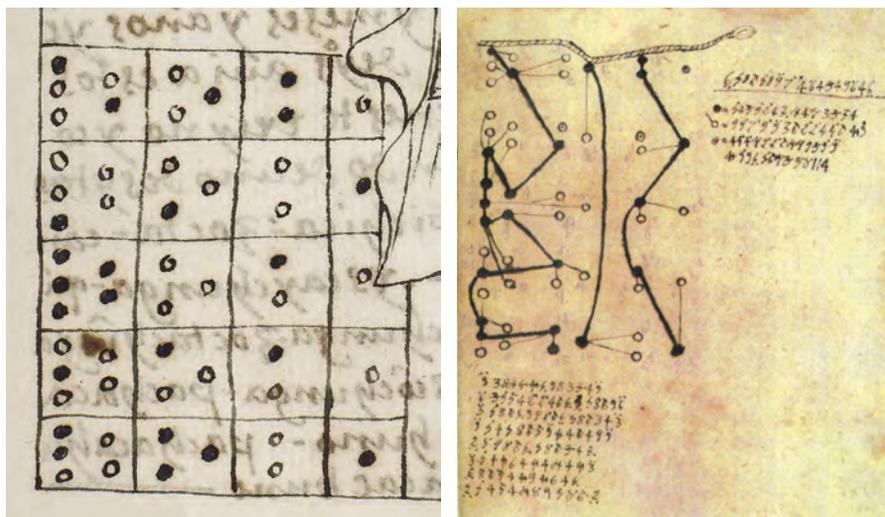


Fig. 5: Detail of the *abacus* on *Nueva corónica* page 360 [362] (left), and JAO's reproduction of the same *abacus* with an explanation on how it would contain the *Sumac ñusta* text (right) (after Domenici 2000).

[poet]; I only say that I would have drawn the signs in that way if I were one of them: but I am sure that you must recognize in every sign how right I was to create them in the way I did, following the Peruvian way of thinking” (De Sangro 1750: 241).³⁷ If this statement is compatible with the idea that De Sangro, based on JAC's examples, created the pictorial signs following their formal class-defining features, it is not compatible with the idea that he copied the signs from Valera-JAO. Why should he have concealed their provenance from an authoritative colonial manuscript source?

Moreover, the master signs in Valera-JAO's khipu are mainly rectangular. As we saw, both *Ruru curipac* and the *Lettera Apologetica* contain mainly round signs and those of *Ruru curipac* were made rectangular only when later repainted. It would be quite strange that De Sangro, seeing rectangular signs in Valera-JAO's khipu, would not have copied them in the same format. Rather, it seems that the modern forger,

³⁷ “Non è però, che io possa giurarvi, che così appunto fossero veramente stati i suddetti segni tra' Peruani *Amauta*, ed *Haravec*, come ora ve gli presento; ma vi dico solamente, che tali gli avrei io disegnati, se fossi stato uno di loro: se non che son pur sicuro, che non potrete non riconoscere in ognuno di essi quanta ragione io abbia avuta per stabilirgli tali, quali gli stabilisco, attesa la maniera del pensare de' Peruani” (De Sangro 1750: 241).

looking at the *Ruru curipac* khipu, did not recognize their original round form, and so made its signs rectangular, both in the painted khipu and in the woven one, where, moreover, weaving round signs would have been a much harder task.

Another difference can be appreciated where De Sangro uses the whole sign *TORA*, while Valera-JAO's khipu uses the form *caTollay + cuRAca*; strangely, the version "concealed" in JAO's *abacus* uses instead the whole word *TORA*. Now, if we posit that De Sangro would not have understood JAO's ciphered text, he could not have taken the form *TORA* from the *abacus*, since its explanation is in ciphered Italian. Rather, it seems that a modern forger used *TORA* in the *abacus*, copying it from the *Lettera Apologetica*, and decided to follow De Sangro's strange note about the possibility of writing it in another form, when painting Valera-JAO's khipu. It is not clear why the forger chose these two different solutions. In the *abacus*, the choice of a single master word was obviously due to the necessity of making the number of master words fit with the total number of black dots in Guaman Poma's drawing. On the other hand, in the case of the painted Valera-JAO khipu, the forger probably chose to introduce a variant in order to "conceal" the other "forced" variants, such as the length of the text and others constraints which we will discuss below.

The main difference between De Sangro's song and Valera-JAO's is the position of the term *Paramunqui*, the last word in Valera-JAO's painted khipu version. Moreover, the word is transcribed in two different ways: while De Sangro writes *PAchacamac + cuRAca + MUNcaynim + QUIlla*, Valera-JAO uses the form *allPacamasca + viRAcocha + MUNcaynim + QUIpu*, and the *abacus* version is again analogous to De Sangro's. Concerning the text order, we can imagine De Sangro preferring Garcilaso's version, again strangely contradicting his own "philological rule," or we can imagine the forger forced to change the text sequence to make it fit into the *abacus*. Concerning the transcription form, it is interesting to note that *Allpacamasca* and *Quipu*, used in Valera-JAO, would be the *only* two master signs used in the manuscript that do *not* appear in De Sangro's Plate 1, thus breaking a rule strictly followed by De Sangro when including in Plate 1 *all* the pictorial master signs represented in his manuscript sources. If we imagine that *Allpacamasca* was rejected because erroneously written in JAC's list (where it is written *Allpachamasca*),³⁸ the

³⁸ Note that the word *Allpachamasca* seems to be a "hypercorrect" construction made by someone who had a very superficial knowledge of Quechua: seeing its translation as "an-

absence of *Quipu* becomes extremely surprising. We could suppose that De Sangro was not able to read the ciphered gloss and thus that he did not understand this part of the painted khipu, but he would obviously have been able to decipher the *viRAcocha* + *MUNCaynim* syllables, and so easily recognize the whole word as the *Paramunqui* verse. Moreover, the iconographic value of the *Quipu* master sign (representing a khipu) is self-evident, and it is therefore improbable that De Sangro would have been unable to understand it. Should we imagine De Sangro voluntarily rejecting the master sign representing a quite important part of his book, when the corresponding master word was also in JAC's list? I rather think that the forger, introducing variants for the reasons stated above, used the correct form *Allpacamasca* (as it appears in Garcilaso's *Comentarios*), and then, probably inspired by JAC's list, decided to create the *Quipu* master sign as the concluding sign of the Valera-JAO khipu, as a kind of ingenious "signature" at the end of his work ...

Modern commentators on the Naples documents have assumed that De Sangro was not able to understand JAO's ciphered texts (had he been able to do so, the absence of *Quipu* in Plate 1 would appear even more inexplicable). In fact, the ciphered texts and their contents are never mentioned in the *Lettera Apologetica* and were purportedly deciphered by Clara Miccinelli after some painstaking research in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI) in Rome. Both assumptions are quite unbelievable: on the basis of the master signs glossed in *Ruru curipac*, De Sangro would have been able to decipher at least the glosses corresponding to the following four master words: *Pachacamac*, *Yanrinnuy*, *Quilla*, and *Tuta*, thus understanding the ciphers corresponding to twelve letters (a, c, h, i/y, l, m, n, p, q, r, t, u). Then, comparing the *Sumac ñusta* text from Garcilaso, JAC's list of master words, and Valera-JAO's painted khipu, he could have understood eight more ciphered glosses (*Suri*, *Nusta*, *Catollay*, *Quinquir*, *Hipuy*, *Unuy*, *Viracocha*, and *Muncaynim*), thus understanding the ciphers of two more letters (s, o) as well as the fact that u and v are transcribed by the same cipher. With a total of fourteen letters, an Italian speaker such as De Sangro (and the present author) could have used them to partially decipher JAO's lengthy ciphered text, easily inferring the lacking letters. I have

imated earth," he thought that the word should contain the term *pacha*, "earth." Rather, the Quechua word *Allpacamasca* is composed of *allpa*, "soil," and *camay*, "to animate."

myself gone through the whole process as an experiment, and in a few hours I had the complete key before my eyes. So, it is quite unbelievable that De Sangro, if he had had the Valera-JAO texts, would not have read the ciphered text, used the information contained in it (especially the *abacus* information), and discarded the *Allpacamasca* and *Quipu* master signs. Moreover, if De Sangro could have read the ciphered glosses in Valera-JAO's khipu, he would obviously have understood that the first word of the song was *Sumac* and not *Cumac*, and he would have corrected his own reading error.

All the contradictions so far observed strongly suggest that Valera-JAO's painted khipu, the woolen khipu, and JAO's texts are not the sources of the *Lettera Apologetica*, but rather depend on it. They were clearly created in order to create a fake source of De Sangro's work that could collaterally host and convey a vast array of "revolutionary" (and false) historical and literary revelations. Moreover, we must note that if JAC's section of HR is sufficient (and indispensable) for explaining many details of the *Lettera Apologetica*'s khipu, JAO's section is in this respect totally redundant and useless, devoid of any explanatory potential. Internal differences suggest that the forger first forcibly "fitted" *Sumac ñusta* into the *abacus* (following as far as possible De Sangro's version with *Tora* and the *Paramunqui* transcription forms), and then painted Valera-JAO's khipu introducing a series of variations.

I would like to note here a significant trait of Valera-JAO's painted master signs: while most of them are formally based on *Ruru curipac* and the *Lettera Apologetica*, two are quite innovative: *Allpacamasca* and *Muncayinim* are represented as square signs containing a "realistic" image (a face for *Allpacamasca* and an *antara* [panpipe] for *Muncayinim*). This is an almost unique trait: in *Ruru curipac* (the sole colonial syllabic khipu so far known), all the pictorial signs contain only color patterns, devoid of any iconographic value by themselves, since limited to indicating the relevant knot class. Moreover, in Valera-JAO's painted khipu, knots are always painted as simple rows of single black dots onto the pendant cords; in contrast, observing the signs that were not repainted in *Ruru curipac*, we can see that some knots are painted on the side of the cord, as if to indicate the single knot's orientation, probably also distinguishing between simple and multiple knots. And, as already observed, in *Ruru curipac*, the single words are spatially separated, a feature not shared by Valera-JAO's khipu. In fact, De Sangro (who was quite a keen observer) clearly distinguished between

the two kinds of knots both in the drawings and in the text, where he described multiple knots as “Franciscan” knots, and spatially separates the verses in his khipu.

Our not so meticulous forger (or, at least, much less so than De Sangro), probably “blinded” by the *Lettera Apologetica*’s colorful Plates, was apparently unable to perceive these important and significant characteristics of the painted *Ruru curipac* khipu, an issue to which we will return in the concluding section.

The Khipu of Exsul Immeritus

Given the fact that *Exsul Immeritus Blas Valera Populo Suo* (referred to from here on as EI) allegedly had a different recent history from HR, never reaching De Sangro’s hands, we should exclude this document from our analysis of De Sangro’s possible sources. Anyway, the presence in EI of many painted syllabic khipu, and of some direct references to HR, suggests that the conclusions so far reached about HR could provide some hints concerning the problem of EI’s authenticity. For our purposes, it is important to remember that EI, allegedly written in 1618, should be earlier than JAO’s texts, dated 1637–38.

This is not the place to carry on a detailed analysis of all EI’s khipu, and we will limit our investigation to a few significant details. In general terms, EI’s syllabic khipu do not spatially separate words or verses, and use a much wider set of master words and pictorial master signs than JAC’s and Valera-JAO’s khipu. Since the author of Valera-JAO and of EI should be the same person (Blas Valera), this last difference is quite surprising.

A large number of the rectangular master signs of EI are explicitly iconographic, containing a vast array of “realistic” images of animals, objects, etc., including the *Allpacamasca* face, as well as the *Quipu*, which are identical with those of JAO. Iconographic knots also appear in EI, sometimes transgressing class categories: for example, the word *Llama* is represented by means of an anthropomorphic knot instead of a “four legged animal” knot. A surprising innovation is constituted by a new type of colored triangular pendants corresponding not to master words or syllables but to alphabetical letters or single phonemes (y, c, s, n, q, i), obviously an attempt to solve the problems posed by transcribing a wide range of texts in a pure syllabic form.

A series of correspondences with the khipu of the fake JAO section of HR are evident: EI uses not only the same *Allpacamasca* and *Quipu*

master signs, but also a master word for “brother” (read as *tura*, i.e. in the Cuzco form of Quechua used in EI), thus copying a master word that we now know was invented by De Sangro. Its use is intriguing: EI employs it in a different version of the *Sumac ñusta* song (entitled *Pachamama*), where it is part of the word *Turallayquim* (now in Cuzco orthography and corrected with the final “m”), as if EI was here used at the same time to give a documented basis to the “brother” master word used in JAO’s *abacus* (in other respects overtly dependent on De Sangro’s *Lettera Apologetica*), as well as to correct the *torallayquin* form used in JAO’s *abacus* and in Valera-JAO’s khipu. EI also offers various other ways of transcribing *TURA/TORA*³⁹ and *PARAMUNQUI*⁴⁰ with new master words, as if to create some “confusion” on precisely those transcriptions in JAO, which we identified as “problematic.” Curiously enough, in the *Pachamama* khipu, the word *Yllapantac* is transformed in EI to *Yllapaqmi*, thus avoiding the problem faced by De Sangro.

In EI’s Addendum II a new version of *Sumac ñusta* is given, where the master word *Quinquir* is changed to *Quimça*, that is, a form that allows to correct the “*Torallayquin* error.”⁴¹ The intent is as bold as it is revealing: the author is here introducing a new master word (*Quimça*, “three”) that has absolutely no relation to the corresponding anthropomorphic pictorial master sign of the “rag” (which we know was invented by De Sangro). In EI’s Addendum IV, then, the author explicitly states that “During the creation of the *quinquir* symbol it was necessary to be careful because it is easily confounded with *quimça* = 3, which, since it also signifies masculinity, associates to human traits, why it is identical to *quinquir* in form, but not in colors” (Laurencich Minelli, 2007: 408). It is obviously an *excusatio non petita* which, besides “forgetting” to explain the iconographic “rag” of the sign, clearly alludes to, and “foresees”, the *Torallayquin* error made in Valera-JAO and in

³⁹ In Addendum II, *Tora* is transcribed as *TOco + cuRAca*.

⁴⁰ On folio 9v, EI transcribes the *RA* syllable of *Paramunqui* in the form *cuRAca*; on folio 9bv the same syllable of *Paramunqui* is transcribed as *çaRA*, that is in a different form that still “fits” in JAO’s *abacus*. In Addendum IV *Paramunqui* is transcribed as *PARA + MUNcaynim + QUIpu*.

⁴¹ Actually, it is not an error: The suffixes *-mi*, *-m* and *-n* are all allomorphs of the Quechua “evidential suffix” denoting that the speaker has actually seen the event he is speaking about or that he took part in it (Bongiorno 2007: 424). In other words, the correction made by the author of EI in order to explain the *-n* form in Valera-JAO’s khipu was much worse than the first “error” itself.

JAO's *abacus*, the latter being a text allegedly written *after* Blas Valera's death.⁴²

The *Exsul Immeritus* (EI), then, is obviously a fake manuscript created in modern times *after* the fake JAO section of HR in order to "solve" problems that could have arisen from a detailed analysis of JAO's khipu. However, these "solutions" were worse than the problems, not only emphasizing the latter, but also revealing the fact that the forgery is modern, probably even contemporary to the first phase of scholarly debate on HR. Let me note that this conclusion is in complete accord with the results of other recent investigations, which, while based on different data and methodologies, have showed that a part of EI is modern, having been produced on the basis of the retouched 1936 facsimile edition of Guaman Poma's work, implying that all text of the Naples documents supposedly inscribed by Blas Valera or Gonzalo Ruíz (including Francisco de Chaves's portrait in the Archivio di Stato di Napoli) are also post-1936 (Boserup and Krabbe Meyer 2015; Boserup 2015, this volume).

The dependence of the syllabic khipu of EI on the fake khipu of JAO is also evidenced by the fact that the forger enhanced the previously noted trend, creating highly iconographic syllabic—and even alphabetic—khipu. We have here an "evolutionary" process in which EI developed from JAO, which itself evolved from JAC, in striking contrast to the supposed dates of the documents, but in close harmony with the order of their modern presentation to the scientific community. During this process, the khipu typology of the Miccinelli documents progressively drifted away from the original khipu of *Ruru curipac*, the only colonial syllabic khipu which—deeply misunderstood by the forger—still deserves our attention.

Saving the Baby From the Bathwater

The analysis so far presented has been useful for identifying a huge group of fake manuscripts. Thus, we should not pay attention to their "revolutionary" revelations concerning the Cajamarca battle, Blas Valera's false death in 1597, Garcilaso's literary betrayal of Blas Valera's ideas and aims, and Blas Valera's authorship of the *Nueva corónica*.

⁴² On the basis of this *Addendum*, the transcription of Valera-JAO's painted khipu in HR was corrected in later publications where *Quimça* appears as a master word. This is not only methodologically incorrect, but clearly contrasts with the corresponding ciphered gloss *quinquir*.

However, I believe that the main result of the present analysis has been the “rescue” of a pre-1750 manuscript, in fact the main source of the khipu system of the *Lettera Apologetica*, that has risked being discarded together with the modern fakes, of being “the baby thrown out with the bathwater” as the old saying goes.⁴³

Now, what is it that has been saved? What does remain in our hands after the critical separation of fake from authentic material? The authentic *Historia et Rudimenta Linguae Piruanorum*, only including JAC and Illanes’s texts (HR-JAC from now on), is a brief Latin manuscript, devoid of any “revolutionary” news but still dense with highly intriguing information. According to its contents, the manuscript was written between the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries by someone signing with the initials JAC, whose identity is still unknown. Determining the date of JAC’s text is problematic: the mutilated dating of the text, intentionally obliterated, is highly suspicious, and it could be due to the modern forger wishing to conceal an original date which did not fit the chronological framework of his fictional construction. Hints concerning the manuscript date are supposedly given by JAC when writing that Mayachac Azuay spoke to him about syllabic khipu when the *curaca* went to Cuzco on the occasion of Tupac Amaru’s execution (1572), that is, *before* Blas Valera’s arrival in Cuzco (sometimes prior to 1576, but surely after 1573; cf. Hyland 2003: 47–52). This would mean that the *curaca* could have met Valera in Lima, Huarochirí, or Santiago del Cercado. Strangely enough, and without mentioning any different source, JAC goes on reporting events of 1587 (thus arguably not deriving from Mayachac Azuay). The past tense invariably used when referring to Valera (e.g. “*Blasius Valera cognoscebat*”; Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli and Animato 1995: 383) seems to suggest that the text was written after Valera’s death in 1597. The usage of the *Veumari* form, deriving from the first printed edition of Garcilaso’s work, suggests 1609 as a *post quem* limit for the manuscript production of JAC. If the author were Juan Antonio Cumis,⁴⁴ the *ante quem* date would be 1618,

⁴³ Our hypothesis that only HR-JAC is authentic, while all the rest of the Naples documents are modern forgeries, clearly departs from previous hypotheses that were divided between those that considered the whole set of Naples documents as authentic, as modern forgeries, or as 17th–18th century forgeries. In our 2003 book (Domenici and Domenici 2003), we tended to favor this last option; we will see later that one should still not exclude the possibility that JAC was written later than stipulated by its contents.

⁴⁴ An identification of JAC is well beyond our scope in this article. It could well be the Italian Jesuit Juan Antonio Cumis (Catanzaro 1537–Lima 1618), as identified by

the year of his death (Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli, and Animato 1995: 375). Rather, as we will see below, other elements strongly suggest an even later date.

Whatever its date, after its production there is no historical trace of the JAC manuscript until 1737, when it came into the possession of the Italian Jesuit Pietro de Illanes, who apparently added the cover with the title *Historia et Rudimenta Linguae Piruanorum IHS*, and inscribed a Spanish text, fully translated here: “The Indian Juan Taquic Menéndez de Sodar, at the moment of his death, gave me this manuscript in the Sacristy of the Church of S. Francesco Xavier of the Society of Jesus, in Concepcion, Chile. Juan Taquic, after having piously confessed himself, gave me a bag containing a small image of the Holy Rosary, some khipu fragments, and this manuscript. The more I read it, its Latin language and the style here employed convince me that the author was a man of the church; the initials JAC suggest that his name was Jacinto or Jacob. Whoever he was, he wrote a really dramatic historical page: beyond any doubt, little remains of an ancient Jerusalem⁴⁵ over which passed powerful and devastating Conquerors. May God have them in His mercy! A.D. MDCCXXXVII Petrus de Illanes JHS”.⁴⁶

The fact that Illanes’s text only mentions the Latin JAC text, with no mention at all of either a ciphered text or of the initials JAO, confirms that Illanes’s text was written on a manuscript containing only JAC.

Laurencich, Miccinelli, and Animato (1995: 375). Since this identification is based on statements contained in the fake JAO text, we nevertheless prefer here to simply use the JAC initials until a more solid identification is reached. In fact, JAC’s text does not clearly state that JAC was a Jesuit, or even an ecclesiastic. It is anyway interesting to note that Cumis entered the Society of Jesus only in 1588, that is, *after* both the presumed meeting with Mayachac Azuay in Cuzco and the 1587 letters exchange between Valera, Atienza, and Aquaviva described by JAC.

⁴⁵ The word Jerusalem was later enclosed in inverted commas inscribed with a modern blue ink (Animato 2001: 90).

⁴⁶ “El indio Juan Taquic Menendez de Sodar me hizo entrega en el momento de su muerte de este manuscrito, en la Sacristiâ Ecclesiæ S. Fran.ci Xaverij S. Jesu de Concepcion de Chile. Juan Taquic despues de haberse piadosamente confesado, me confio una bolsa que contenia una pequeña imagen del S.S. Rosario, algunos fragmentos de quipu y este manuscrito. Cuanto mas lo leo, la lengua latina y el estilo que empleo me hacer[sic!] cie[r]tamente suponer que el autor era un Clerigo; las inicial[es] Jac. hacen pensar que el nombre sea Jacinto o Jacob. Quienquiera que sea, ha escrito una pagina de historia verdaderamente dramatica: es poco, sin duda, lo que queda de la antigua “Jerusalem” sobre la cual pasaron poderosos y devastadores Conquistadores. Dios los tenga en su misericordia! A.D. MDCCXXXVII Petrus de Illanes JHS”.

His mention of khipu fragments probably suggested to the forger the idea of “recreating” one of them. Since the woolen khipu annexed to HR contains the word *torallayquin*, dependent on Baudoin’s and De Sangro’s versions, it obviously cannot be the fragment mentioned by Illanes.

According to the *Lettera Apologetica*, after his arrival in Italy Illanes donated the HR-JAC manuscript to De Sangro,⁴⁷ who used it as his main source on syllabic khipu. We do not know the later history of the manuscript, nor how it ended up in Clara Miccinelli’s private collection (see note 20). Ascertaining answers to these problems is well beyond the scope of the present text, which is aimed at identifying authentic documentary evidence of “real” colonial khipu systems within the corpus of the Naples documents.

I would like to stress here again that the repainting of some of *Ruru curipac*’s signs with titanium dioxide, and the blue ink and inverted commas in Illanes’s text around the word Jerusalem, far from evidencing an unusually sloppy forger, are, in my opinion, simple traces of the document’s still not fully known later “biography.” It is important to note that JAC’s section of HR is the *only* section of the Naples documents to bear such overt traces of modern manipulations, traces that would hardly be understandable in the work of a modern forger.

For sure, however, our conclusions regarding the relationship between HR-JAC and the *Lettera Apologetica* far from solve all the problems that concern the document’s nature, so that various problems need to be addressed before completely accepting HR-JAC’s authenticity. First of all, JAC apparently contains the word *genocidium*, a word that, as Juan Carlos Estenssoro noted, is a modern neologism coined in 1944 (Estenssoro 1997 571). After Estenssoro’s criticism, Clara Miccinelli changed her reading to *gen. ocidium* (that is *generis ocidium* or *gentis ocidium*; Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli, Animato 1995: 387) and later in *geneae; dium* (Miccinelli 2001; see also Arana and Rodríguez 2001: 8). In my opinion, in the earlier published photos of the manuscript, the word *genocidium*

⁴⁷ Clara Miccinelli stated that in the Archivio Notarile Distrettuale of Naples there once existed a contract concerning the sale of HR by Illanes to De Sangro; she even showed me an authenticated photocopy of it that I transcribed in my 2003 book (Domenici and Domenici 2003: 104). Years later, Leen Spruit tried to see the contract but, surprisingly, it had disappeared from the archive (Spruit 2002: 48, note 187). Since this contract mentioned a document composed of 18 folios (“36 pages [*frontes*]”) and also describes the painted and the woolen khipu, corresponding to the current state of HR, I am now convinced that it was also a forgery.

is quite clearly readable, so the problem is therefore still unresolved. However, nothing prevents a neologism to be invented twice, or many more times if the social conditions are such that they create a need for a word denoting actual events. In the light of the present analysis, I am quite skeptical that JAC could be of modern date—that is, after 1750.

Although most of the criticisms so far advanced have focused on the “revolutionary” contents of JAO and EI, the sections of JAC and Illanes of HR were not overlooked. Juan Carlos Estenssoro (1997) noted problems such as the unusual two-column structure of the JAC text, a series of errors in the Spanish and Quechua syntax and grammar in the same text, its supposedly anachronistic usage of the expression “supreme being” (*ser supremo*), an unexplained seal on folio 3r, an apparent difference between the calligraphy of Illanes’s text and of his signature, and an anachronistic punctuation in the Illanes text. Moreover, Tom Zuidema noted that the name *Citu* that JAC uses for the solstice seems to be drawn from the 1644 work of Montesinos (Zuidema 2001: 369), and that JAC’s mention of Inka treasures submerged in the Urcos Lake seems to derive from Anello Oliva’s 1631 work (Zuidema 2001: 370–71), all in all suggesting a later date for JAC’s writings. Bruce Mannheim (Domenici and Domenici 1996: 55) noted that JAC’s Quechua master words seem to be of northern, probably Ecuadorian, origin, and that they cannot be earlier than the middle of the 17th century. Similarly, Rodolfo Cerrón-Palomino has suggested a late date, even in the 18th century, for the dialectal Quechua variants. If some of these criticisms can be seriously met (see Animato 2001; Domenici and Domenici 2003: 201–7; Hyland 2003: 217–24), and if others could be explained by such reasons as the wrong and incomplete decipherment of *Ruru curipac* by JAC and by his scarce knowledge of the Quechua and Spanish languages, others remain nevertheless without a clear explanation. A more serene critical reconsideration of this now much less “revolutionary” manuscript by independent scholars is badly needed. It is anyway important to stress here that my analysis only suggests that HR-JAC is a pre-1750 manuscript not necessarily to be dated to the turn of the 16th and into the 17th centuries, in contrast to what its contents would indicate. Then, we should still consider the hypothesis that it could have been written at a later date, as some of the mentioned criticisms seem to suggest. The fact that Garcilaso’s *Comentarios* contains forty-three out of fifty-seven of JAC’s master words (75.4 %), albeit often with different orthography, indicates a strong relationship between the two texts. Even if it could be explained by their common usage of information

deriving from Blas Valera, in my opinion the form *Veumari* in JAC's list shows that the author, obviously not a good Quechua-speaker, copied the word from a printed edition of the *Comentarios*, making exactly the same type of reading errors later made by De Sangro, or, more probably, from a manuscript list deriving from a printed edition.⁴⁸ The erroneous alphabetical position of *Quipu* in JAC's list, where it antecedes *Quinquir*, suggests that the list is the outcome of the insertion of words of unknown provenance in a list deriving from Garcilaso.

The data discussed so far indicate that JAC is a document most probably written between 1609 and 1750.⁴⁹ The aforementioned observations concerning its Quechua vocabulary and its dependence on Oliva and Montesinos's works, suggest that it could have been written after the middle of the 17th century. Its author was a poor Quechua-speaking person whose linguistic habits (hesitations between verbs *ser* and *estar*, usage of forms such as "l'Arca", etc.), suggest a possible Italian origin.⁵⁰ His specific identity and his relationship to Mayachac Azuay, Taquic Menéndez de Sodar, and Pedro de Illanes, are still open issues. If he wrote in the second half of the 17th century, it is obviously almost impossible that he would have met Mayachac Azuay in 1572 in Cuzco, so we should contemplate the possibility that he was lying about the source of his data.

JAC's Contents: Truths, Lies, or True Lies?

Even if probably later than presumed, the genuinely pre-1750 HR-JAC manuscript raises interesting questions concerning the veracity of its contents. Should we dismiss them as purely fictitious inventions of a

⁴⁸ The *Veumari* form appears since the 1609 Lisbon edition; the 1723 Madrid edition includes a final "Tabla de cosas notables" where the word *Veumari* is listed in an alphabetical order where U and V are mixed (both transcribed as "V") and where *Veumari* and *Viracocha* antecede *Unu*, *Uritu*, etc. Anyway, many differences in transcription forms and Spanish translations almost rule out the possibility that JAC was actually copying directly from the 1723 edition.

⁴⁹ In fact, since De Sangro states that he acquired the manuscript "some years" before writing the *Lettera Apologetica* (De Sangro 1750: 241), and since Pedro de Illanes died in 1746, the *ante quem* date for the production of JAC should probably be assigned to the early 1740s.

⁵⁰ Hyland has suggested that Anello Oliva could be the author of the whole set of the Naples Documents (Hyland 2003: 224–35). The hypothesis is still interesting, but it cannot be documented by the testimony of JAO, a modern forgery.

colonial forger, thus devoid of any importance concerning the study of Blas Valera's life, his conception of Inka religion, and the syllabic khipu system? Unfortunately, our uncertainty about the manuscript date prevents us from knowing whether JAC's data were recorded in the decades immediately following Blas Valera's death, when the memory of his actions and thoughts should still have been vivid, or if they were the product of a much later (late 17th to 18th century?) re-energizing of Valera's legacy among a "radical" faction of the Jesuit world, as proposed by R. Tom Zuidema (2001), Borja de Medina (Albó 1998: 334), and Juan Ossio (Mumford 2000: 44–45), with the substantial agreement of Hyland (2003).

Nevertheless, JAC's statements about the reasons of Valera's imprisonment show that JAC had access to genuine and secret information, probably handed down in the Jesuit sphere. JAC clearly states that Valera's problems with the Jesuit Order were not linked to a presumed sexual relationship with a woman, but rather to his critical view on Spanish colonial policies and their methods of enforcing them, as well as to his ideas concerning Inka religion, which in his opinion was in some way similar to the Catholic faith. As already noted, Sabine Hyland (1998; 2003: 183–94, 222) pointed out that this statement closely matches the contents of a letter by Juan de Atienza, declaring that in January 1583, the Jesuit Procurator of the Peruvian Province, Andrés López, went to Rome to inform the General of the Company of Jesus Claudio Aquaviva about Valera's guilt, a matter too sensitive to be committed to paper (Hyland 2003: 184). Hyland (1998; 2003: 191–93, 243–44) also noted that an unpublished document in the National Historical Archives in Madrid records the testimony of father Luis Garcete, Superior of the Jesuit College in Panama. On August 11th, 1591, in front of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, Garcete stated that Valera had been condemned not for fornication but for heresy; as a consequence, Garcete was immediately transferred to Italy. As a matter of fact, Valera's punishment was highly unusual for a fornication case. In 1585 he was sentenced to four years imprisonment in the College of Lima; in 1587 the verdict was changed to six years of house arrest, and in 1593, Valera was transferred to the College in Quito, and then, in 1595, to Cadiz, Spain. Here, Valera had the opportunity to teach humanities in the Jesuit College, but interestingly General Acquaviva forbade him to teach (Latin) grammar. Since we cannot trust JAO's story about Valera's "false death," we must still believe in the official story of Garcilaso. On April 2nd, 1597, Valera died in Malaga after having

been wounded during the Count of Essex's plunder of Cadiz. Nearly all of Valera's papers were destroyed when Cadiz was set on fire, and just a few "broken papers"—including the *Sumac ñusta* text—reached the hands of Alonso de Saavedra, who later gave them to Garcilaso de la Vega, who published them, translated from Latin to Spanish, in his *Comentarios*.

In her excellent essay on the life and work of Blas Valera, Sabine Hyland (2003) not only reconstructs the details of Valera's biography, but also thoroughly discusses "Valera's guilt," that is, his conception of Inka religion as similar to Christian faith (see also Marzal 2001), as well as of Quechua as a civilizing idiom comparable to Latin. Valera probably shared some of these ideas with a group of pro-Indian writers both inside and outside of the Company of Jesus (cf. Lohmann Villena 1970; Hyland 2003: 87–94; Hyland 2004; Colajanni 2006), and JAC's text reflects similar syncretistic conceptions, when he, citing Valera in an indirect form, speaks of an Ark with Tables given to Apo Manco Capac by God Pachacamac Illa Tecce. This mixture of Christian and Inka religious themes also reminds us of a similar conception of Pachacamac as the True God, expressed in the *Relación de las costumbres antiguas* of the so-called Anonymous Jesuit (Hyland 2003: 143, 157–58), a much-debated text that could have been written by Blas Valera, as Hyland believes (2003: 82–87), or that anyway does seem strongly dependent on his work. Other references to syncretistic conceptions can be found in JAC's list of master words, where Pachacamac is translated as "Creator, Supreme Being" ("*Hazedor, Ser supremo,*" reflected in De Sangro's "Creator of the Universe;" De Sangro 1750: 246), and *Viracocha* as "incarnate God" ("*Dios encarnado,*" reflected in De Sangro's "Human figure taken on by [...] God [Pachacamac];" Sansevero 1750: 247).⁵¹ Therefore, JAC may

⁵¹ We should note here that if the painted *Sumac ñusta* khipu is a forgery, the suggestion by Hyland that the Viracocha master sign (combining a godly and a human sign) is a direct expression of these syncretistic ideas (Hyland 2003: 143–44) cannot be upheld. Rather, this master sign appears now to be a clever invention of De Sangro inspired by the translation of Viracocha as "incarnate God" given in JAC's list. I also disagree with her interpretation of the order of master signs on De Sangro's Plate 1 as reflecting a Valeran Christian-Andean cosmology (Hyland 2003: 146). Since JAC does not contain any categorizations of master words (in JAC's list the words are listed in a simple alphabetical order), we should rather assume that De Sangro's Plate 1 roughly reflects a typically European encyclopaedic tradition where the universal hierarchy starts with divine beings, proceeds with humans, earthly phenomena and animals, and ends with inanimate objects.

provide important hints on Valera's pro-Indian and syncretistic religious beliefs that comply with the testimony of other independent sources.

The syllabic khipu as a hybrid communication system

What, then, about the syllabic khipu system? The relationship that JAC establishes between syllabic khipu and Blas Valera seems to be in harmony with Valera's conception of Quechua. In fact, as Hyland (2003: 122–49) noted, in the Valeran conception of things, the very existence of a native khipu writing system would have placed Quechua on the same level as other “divine” tongues such as Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The existence of a proper pre-colonial khipu writing system is still a controversial issue, and for a variety of reasons we can state quite confidently that HR-JAC cannot be the “Rosetta Stone” of Inka literary khipu. First, no known Andean khipu closely matches the formal structure of JAC's syllabic khipu. Moreover, JAC's system would be quite inefficient, since it would require extremely long khipu to knot up even short phrases. Even more importantly, it is highly unlikely that any syllabic writing system was developed in the Pre-Hispanic Andean world. Rather, I agree with Hyland (2003: 136, 148–49) that the syllabic khipu system was a *colonial* experiment probably devised by Valera and his pro-Indian fellow Jesuits (see also Arnold 2007), maybe basing their invention on certain characteristics of the native khipu system.

Christian missionaries in the colonial New World were extremely interested in using and transforming native communication systems in order to facilitate their teachings. The Mexican Testerian pictographic catechisms (Glass 1975) are probably the most famous example of this trend, but similar phenomena are also known in the colonial Andean world. If Andean pictographic catechisms in southern Peru and Bolivia (Ibarra Grasso 1948, 1953; Hartmann 1991; Mitchell and Jaye 1996; Jaye and Mitchell 1999) were probably a late phenomenon, mostly dating to the 19th century,⁵² and probably—albeit remotely—derived from earlier Mexican ones, the usage of khipu as recording devices for Christian confessions is well attested since the 16th century (Harrison 1992, 2002). Syllabic khipu systems could thus be perceived as a similar colonial

⁵² Interestingly, Métraux (1963:14) mentions the 17th-century graphical representation of Catholic prayers in the Jesuit mission of Juli, a mission where Blas Valera worked in the previous century. Unfortunately, Métraux did not provide any data supporting his statement.

phenomenon. In the 1580s, the Mercedarian missionary Diego de Porres instructed his fellow friars to encode in khipu the requirements of the Bishops of the Third Lima Council as well as Catholic prayers which the Indians would “pray by pauses and *syllables*” (emphasis added; see Assadourian 2002: 137; Hyland 2003: 13). In this light, JAC’s syllabic system appears to be a less unique case, although with a fundamental difference. If most hybrid systems were “European adaptations of native symbols and media to further European religious and colonial goals” (Mitchell and Jaye 1996: 24), the “Valeran” system would be best described as a hybrid adaptation of native symbols and media to further syncretistic Christian-Andean religious goals. Mannheim’s suggestion that JAC’s master words seem to pertain to Ecuadorian Quechua, the existence of an “Equinox” (*pinunsun*) master word (Hyland 2002: 161–62), together with Montesinos’s statement that literary khipu (“their information was contained in themselves”) were especially common in Quito (Hyland 2003: 133), could suggest a northern Andean origin for this hybrid phenomenon, as Hyland first proposed (2002: 162).

Should we simply consider the syllabic khipu system as an ingenious and interesting historical phenomenon, but ultimately unhelpful to understand the pre-colonial native khipu system? Probably not. We know that JAC glossed an earlier *Ruru curipac* drawing which he only partially understood; we ignore the date and provenance of the drawing, but as we saw in the case of Blas Valera’s life and thoughts, it could well evidence a genuine, early colonial tradition of syllabic khipu. As we observed, Christian missionaries sometimes created hybrid systems, and I think that we should now look at the *Ruru curipac* khipu in order to verify whether some aspects of its working method could have been drawn from native khipu and adapted to fulfill the needs of Jesuit khipu-writers.

To investigate the possible native bases of the syllabic khipu system, and assuming that the introduction of the syllabic principle derived from a European conception of writing, we should look at the notation devices used in *Ruru curipac* to indicate the master words. Deleting from our minds all the iconographic signs found in the fake JAO section of HR and in EI, we can now take a “fresh” look at the pictorial master signs of *Ruru curipac*, decidedly not so “iconography-laden” (Urton 2002: 19) as those in the forged documents. In the *Ruru curipac* khipu, the iconographic elements on the pendant cords are almost completely limited to complex knots that signify specific classes of beings: humans, four-legged animals, serpents, avians, and celestial

phenomena (that is, semicircular signs meaning “rainbow,” “night,” and “upper world”). The color of the thread indicates the specific element of the class: pink anthropomorphic knot = *runa* (“man”), black anthropomorphic knot = *curaca* (“chief”), white four-legged knot = *uturuncu* (“tiger”), black four-legged knot = *ucumari* (“bear”), and so on. Another set of pictorial master signs is only based on color patterns:⁵³ a four-color pattern for *Pachacamac*, a black and white pattern for *yanriñuy* (“eclipse”), etc. Concerning the knots in the lower part of the pendant cord, as already noted, *Ruru curipac* also seems to distinguish simple from complex knots and probably also indicates the orientation of the knots.

It is important to stress here that JAC explicitly describes the master signs of both classes as *knotted*, not woven, polychrome elements, writing that “thanks to their dexterity with knots, they twist them in knots of different colors to form the required concept.”⁵⁴ When describing the Pachacamac master sign, JAC stated that “a yellow thread knotted in its middle part in more knots, as a square divided in four parts,”⁵⁵ was hanging from the main cord. Moreover, he never mentioned the activity of weaving loose signs to be later attached to the cords, a misleading idea apparently invented by De Sangro (1750: 262–64) and naïvely adopted by the forger who replicated and expanded it both in JAO and EI.⁵⁶ In fact, De Sangro (who also speaks of knotted signs) explicitly attributes the idea of weaving (and not knotting) master signs to the Italian Princess of Striano who, after seeing khipu made by De Sangro himself and reading the *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, invented a small loom for master sign weaving (De Sangro 1750: 312–14). Apparently, the modern forger unconsciously replicated the work of an 18th-century Italian Princess ...

So, the notational devices of JAC's khipu are limited to color patterns and complex iconographic knots referring to classes of objects

⁵³ The only exception to this principle is *coyllur* (“star”), where the black and white sign has a star-like form.

⁵⁴ “propter familiarem staminibus usum volutis nodis varie coloratis significationem exprimunt” (Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli, and Animato 1995: 385).

⁵⁵ “flavus pendebat filus in medio pluribus nodis ligatus sicut parvus quadratus subdivisus in quattuor partes” (Laurencich Minelli, Miccinelli, and Animato 1995: 385).

⁵⁶ In JAO's text, the forger explicitly states that the signs were woven by the *acillacuna* and later attached to the cords. He was obviously inspired by De Sangro's statement concerning Inka women knotting the khipu master signs (De Sangro 1750: 262–64).

and beings. These devices closely remind us of some famous colonial descriptions of “literary” khipu. Garcilaso de la Vega, for example, stated that “colors, alone or joined, had specific meanings. [...] On the basis of color they understood what was referred to in a thread: for example, yellow indicated gold, white indicated silver and crimson indicated warriors”⁵⁷ (*Comm*, VI, 8). The same author also wrote that “they had signs that indicated noticeable historical facts, messages, reasonings, and peace or war speeches. The *khipukamayuc* used to learn these speeches by heart, and by means of brief words, they memorized them and taught them to their successors”⁵⁸ (*Comm*. VI, 9, emphasis added). Similarly, José de Acosta says that “different knots and different colors signify different things” (Acosta, *Hist.* Book. VI), and the Augustinian missionary Antonio de la Calancha, besides mentioning color categories similar to those mentioned by Garcilaso (yellow for gold, white for silver, black for time) also explicitly describes complex knots identifying classes distinguished by colors: a big knot with a crimson thread signified the Inka, while the same knot with a purple thread meant a *curaca* (Calancha 1974: 206–8).

This last description of knot classes is quite intriguing, given its similarity to the knot classes seen in *Ruru curipac*. Concerning the color patterns, if no khipu with master signs is known, at least a single example of a Wari khipu in the American Museum of Natural History in New York (khipu #41.2/7679) has been noted by Sabine Hyland as having different color patterns in the upper part of the pendant cords.⁵⁹ More generally, I would also argue that color patterns similar to those contained in the *Ruru curipac* signs could well have been recorded in pre-colonial khipu by means of different color threads in the so-called “barber’s pole” cords, without any need of master signs on the upper part of the cord. A similar notational device is suggested by de la Calancha when stating that each province of the empire was identified

⁵⁷ [...] los colores simples y los mezclados todos tenían significación de por sí. [...] Por los colores sacaban lo que se contenía en aquel tal hilo, como el oro por el amarillo y la plata por el blanco y por el colorado la gente de guerra”.

⁵⁸ [...] tenían señales que mostraban los hechos historiales hazañosos o haber habido embajada, razonamiento o plática hecha en paz o en guerra. Las cuales pláticas tomaban los indios *quipucamayus* de memoria en suma, en breves palabras y las encomendaban a la memoria y por tradición las enseñaban a los sucesores [...].

⁵⁹ Gary Urton also noted some resemblances to the HR khipu in some of the Middle-Horizon khipus stored in the American Museum of Natural History in New York (Domenici and Domenici 1996: 56).

by a specific mixture of colors in a khipu cord, or that the Sun was signified by a cord plied with white, blue, and yellow threads (Calancha 1974: 206–8; cfr. also Assadourian 2002: 129–31). Interestingly, colonial and modern confession-khipu used colors (and maybe color patterns) in order to signify specific sins (Harrison 2002: 280–81).

At least from the point of view of its physical appearance, the khipu system attested in the *Ruru curipac* drawing, and described and deciphered by JAC, is thus much more Andean than previously thought, and, to a certain degree, more similar to some of the many “anomalous” khipu stored in museums all over the world. Apparently, the visual rendering of the signs in the *Ruru curipac* painting was, again, misunderstood by the forger who described (and actually produced) woven and metal master signs that existed only in his mind, and which misguided the attention of modern scholars. It is worth mentioning here that De Sangro was apparently a much more keen observer than the forger: in the *Lettera Apologetica* khipu, the master signs always appear as three-dimensional knotted signs rather than plain woven ones.

If we leave aside the syllabic value attributed to the signs, the *Ruru curipac* khipu shows a notation system based on knot forms, orientation, and color patterns, that is, on those very elements that Gary Urton identified as possible notational devices in Pre-Hispanic khipu (Urton 2003: 104). These native notational devices, signifying classes or types of objects and beings (Murra’s “ethnocategories”; see Murra 1973; Urton 1998: 424–28), and probably linked to some kind of mnemonic recording of their meaning, were apparently observed by some Jesuits who adapted them to the necessities of their syllabic system maintaining their original physical form, obviously dependent on the native khipu-keepers’ manual skills in knotting and “finger reading” (tactility), as properly observed by JAC.

Regarding the contents of literary khipu, it is interesting to note here that all the texts associated to colonial syllabic khipus in JAC and in the *Comentarios* (such as *Ruru curipac*, *Huayna Capac*, *Sumac ñusta*) are chants rather than prose texts. This fact, joined with historical and ethnographical information concerning the close relationship linking memory and chanting in pre-Hispanic, colonial, and modern Quechua culture (Harrison 1989), could throw some light on the kind of “reading” associated with Inka literary khipu. Gary Urton, for example, supposed that the recitation of formulaic expressions was an important component of khipu narrative strategies (Urton 2003: 10), also stressing that parallelistic couplets would have been quite common (Urton

2003: 154–60). The *conquistador* Miguel Estete, apparently seeming to assess the inefficiency of khipu, paired khipu reading and singing: “they recall the memory of things by means of certain cords and knots, though the most notable things are remembered in songs” (cit. in Urton 2002: 6). A similar pairing, but with a different hue, was also made by Garcilaso de la Vega, probably referring to information deriving from Valera, when stating that *khipukamayuyq* preserved the tradition of their deeds “by means of the knots, strings, and colored threads, *using their stories and poems as an aid*”⁶⁰ (my emphasis; Garcilaso, *Comentarios*, VI, 9). I do not believe that this statement alluded to some inefficiency of the khipu system to be counterbalanced by *alternative* forms of mnemonic recording.⁶¹ Rather, I would argue that the khipu notational system was *structurally* associated, at least in some “literary khipus” genres, to some form of formulaic, highly formalized orality, such as chanting, as also suggested by Carlos Sempat Assadourian (2002: 133). Such an association would hardly be surprising: chanting of parallelistic texts was also associated with other native American notational systems such as Mesoamerican or Central American ones (e.g. Severi 2004: 87–184, Domenici 2016). Significantly, Pedro Cieza de León similarly stated that Inka kings used to command “old Indians” (*yndios viejos*) both to remember and compose historical songs, as well as to record on khipu economic information, thus implying that *khipukamayuyq* were also specialized in chanting.⁶² Cristóbal de Molina, who recorded various Inka songs, compared Inka khipu with Spanish rosaries: “*quipos, que casi son a modo de pavilos con que las viejas reçan en nuestra España*” (“quipos, that are almost as the rosaries which old ladies use to pray in Spain” Molina 1988: 58), a not unusual association in Colonial Peru (Dransart 2002). Seen in this light, substituting pre-colonial Inka chants with Christian prayers or with Christian-Andean syncretistic songs wouldn’t have been too weird an idea.

⁶⁰ “[...] por los hilos y por los colores de los hilos y con el favor de los cuentos y de la poesía”.

⁶¹ On Estete’s erroneous distinction between songs and khipu, see Assadourian 2002: 126.

⁶² “[...] mandava a llamar a otros de sus yndios viejos, a los quales mandava que tuviesen cuydado de saber los cantares que aquellos tenían en la memoria y de ordenar otros de nuevo de lo que pasava en el tiempo de su reynado, y que las cosas que se gastavan y lo que las provincias contribuyan se asentase en los quipos para que se supiese lo que davan [...]” (Cieza de León 1986: 31).

A final element I want to mention here is an interesting 18th-century “ethnographic” piece of information that De Sangro recorded from Pietro de Illanes. The Chilean Jesuit told De Sangro that “today [the khipu] are no longer understood and interpreted, except those regarding family accounting; anyway, they preserve with huge pomp the khipu they have inherited, and a particular weed or seed (I can’t remember the name) has a marvelous effect on their conservation against parasites” (De Sangro 1750: 244).⁶³ I think that the “huge pomp” mentioned by Illanes is strongly reminiscent of the performative value of khipu keeping and displaying in contemporary Andean communities (Salomon 2001, 2004; Salomon et al. 2011).

Once separated from the misleading array of fake khipu in most of the Naples documents, HR-JAC’s (ultimately Valera’s?) syllabic khipu system appears as an extremely interesting (although historically aborted) colonial experiment, a hybrid consequence of the clash between orality, knot-recording, and writing in the colonial Andean world (see Classen 1991). Liberated not only from the ravages of time but also from the ignominious (and dumb) forger’s manipulations, this “vital strand of native colonial discourse” (Hyland 2003: 148) informs us about native Andean record-keeping systems, on their colonial perception and transformation, and on their ingenious 18th-century reinterpretation by Raimondo de Sangro. Seen in this light, HR-JAC deserves further studies, both to clarify some still controversial elements, and to fully exploit the informative potential of a manuscript that deserves to be counted among the most thought-provoking Andean colonial sources.

Among these sources, the (mountain) lion’s share still goes to the *Nueva corónica* of Guaman Poma, whose authorship should not anymore be called into question.

⁶³ “[...] quantunque oggigiorno non fossero più affatto, a riserva di quelli de’ conti familiari, intesi e interpretati; pure gran pompa essi faceano di conservar quelli, che eran venuti loro in retaggio, e che meraviglioso era per la conservazione de’ medesimi l’effetto d’una certa loro (non mi ricordo bene) se erba, o semenza nemicissima delle tignuole” (De Sangro 1750: 244).

SUMMARY

DAVIDE DOMENICI: *Disentangling Knots. Real and fictional khipu systems in the Naples documents, Garcilaso de la Vega's Comentarios, Guaman Poma's Nueva corónica, and Raimondo De Sangro's Lettera apologetica*

The present paper offers a new critical approach to the so-called Naples documents, a group of controversial manuscripts that contain unprecedented claims regarding Peruvian colonial history, among them the attribution to the *mestizo* Jesuit Father Blas Valera of the authorship of *El primer nueva corónica i buen gobierno* of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, one of the treasures of the Royal Library of Denmark. The Naples documents ignited a scholarly controversy, placing scholars who considered them to be bold modern forgeries in opposition to scholars who believed in their authenticity and veracity. The strategy chosen here for attempting to make some progress in assessing the authenticity of single parts of the Naples documents consists of a deliberate focus on one single, major aspect, to the disregard of others. In the present case, the focus is on the various examples of “syllabic *khipu*” represented in the documents, considered from the vantage point of Raimondo de Sangro’s *Lettera apologetica* (1750). In this famous book, the Neapolitan intellectual presented an example of a “syllabic *khipu*” writing system, apparently derived from one of the two main Naples documents. A detailed analysis of the diverse relationships between the *Lettera Apologetica* and the Naples documents makes it possible to demonstrate that only a small part of the documents can be considered to be earlier than 1750, and hence potentially can be identified with what De Sangro himself mentions as being his main source. However, most parts of the Naples manuscripts are manifestly dependent on the *Lettera Apologetica*, and are therefore clearly not what they purport to be. On the basis of our analysis, we propose that the authentic pre-1750 part of one of the documents is an interesting source on the colonial perception and transformation of native Andean *khipu*, but that it is devoid of any “revolutionary” content. The demonstration that the Naples documents with one single exception are clear post-1750 forgeries thus implies that their claims must be rejected, including those regarding *El primer nueva corónica i buen gobierno*, the distinctive and unique achievement of the Andean Indian Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala.

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