

THE ILLUSTRATED CODEX (1615/1616) OF  
FELIPE GUAMAN POMA DE AYALA:  
TOWARD A NEW ERA OF READING<sup>1</sup>

BY

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Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru. Second Edition, with a New Introduction*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. Pp. lix, 194.

Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma and His Illustrated Chronicle from Colonial Peru: from a Century of Scholarship to a New Era of Reading*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen, The Royal Library, 2001. Pp. 88, xv.

Rolena Adorno and Ivan Boserup, *New studies of the Autograph Manuscript of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's Nueva coronica y buen gobierno*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2003. Pp. 140.

Without a doubt, the most extraordinary and important document that the colonial Andean world possesses is *El primer nueva coronica y buen gobierno* ("The First New Chronicle and Good Government"), an extremely long letter-petition destined for Philip III, king of Spain, and written by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, an Andean Indian from the region of Huamanga (Ayacucho, Peru), between the years of 1600 and 1616. In the 1190 pages of the original manuscript, with its 398 drawings, the author proposed in the first part ("new chronicle") to reconstruct the history of humanity in the Andes, from its origins to the last Incas, interweaving it with biblical history and presenting a detailed portrait of the social, political, and religious organization of *Tahuantinsuyu* (the Inca empire). In the second part ("good government") he denounced, in a documented manner and without mincing words, the miserable and oppressed condition of

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the indigenous Andean population under Spanish rule, suggesting to the monarch, and invoking for him, a series of corrective measures to reverse the perilous trend. The document is a truly unique monument of Andean and Peruvian historiography because of three factors: its status as one of the few documents of the colonial era written by a native Amerindian author, the quantity of data and the originality and precision of the information that the work contains, and, above all, its remarkable illustrations. For these reasons, and quite justly, the work figures in UNESCO's list of the "Memory of the World."

Among scholars the interest in this chronicle has been growing steadily since almost a century ago when, between 1908 and 1912, Professor Richard Pietschmann of Göttingen University announced to the scientific community of Americanists the existence of the work in the collections of the Royal Library of Denmark, in Copenhagen, where the illustrated codex had been preserved since at least the first half of the eighteenth century. The document began to be known and studied, although still by a limited group of specialists, as from 1936, when Professor Paul Rivet published a facsimile edition (based on partially retouched photographic reproductions) through the Institute of Ethnology of the University of Paris. On its basis Arthur Posnansky (Guaman Poma 1944) and Luis F. Bustíos Gálvez (Guaman Poma 1956-1966) later elaborated the first – really not very precise – paleographic transcriptions. But it was only in 1980, with the meticulous critical edition of John V. Murra and Rolena Adorno, that the work became more widely available so that finally it could be fully appreciated and utilized by a greater number of historians, anthropologists, literary scholars, linguists, art historians, and even archaeologists, specialized in Andean studies.

Now, since May, 2001, the Royal Library of Denmark has put on the Internet (at the site [www.kb.dk/elib/mss/poma](http://www.kb.dk/elib/mss/poma)), with free access, a complete digital facsimile of the autograph manuscript prepared under the supervision of Rolena Adorno, who, with her books, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* ([1986] 2000) and *Cronista y príncipe: la obra de don Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala* (1989) (see also Adorno et al. 1992), has become the undisputed authority on the subject. This noteworthy electronic edition is accompanied by a competent, updated introductory study by the same scholar, as well as two useful tables of contents and drawings. It also contains the Quechua language glossary and the onomastic and ethnological indexes from Murra and Adorno's print edition of 1980. In addition, the website contains essays on Guaman Poma and his work by Adorno, Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, Tom Cummins, and Juan Ossio, and links, e.g. to a

bibliography on Guaman Poma prepared by Manuel García Castellón. The website also includes digital facsimiles of two other related documents: one, *Luz de materia de Indias* (which is also preserved at the Royal Library of Denmark), is the report that at the end of his term in office Don Juan de Mendoza y Luna, the marquis of Montesclaros, who was viceroy of Peru from 1607 to the end of 1615, directed to his successor. In it he presents a set of criticisms and proposals for reform of the colonial government that were remarkably similar to those advanced in the *Nueva crónica*. The other document, designated as the "Expediente Prado Tello," is a dossier of litigations from the seventeenth century, with copies of a collection of land titles and property claims to lands in the valley of Chupas (Ayacucho) relative to the period 1560-1647, among which figure copies of legal petitions, a map and two drawings made by Guaman Poma himself.

This online digital version of the *Nueva crónica* permits a much clearer reading than is possible in the facsimile edition of 1936, and even that of the original manuscript, since, thanks to the sophisticated electronic techniques utilized in the preparation of the images, one can come to appreciate in their entirety details that on simple observation would hardly be visible. The same can be said for the drawings which, with their fine pen strokes, neat lines, and sepia tones, turn out to be far more delicate and artistic than their reproductions in the various print editions (such as Rivet's in 1936, Murra and Adorno's in 1980, and those of Franklin Pease G.Y. in 1980 and 1993). All this amounts to a complete revelation for the reader accustomed to the thick, black, uncertain and slightly crude lines of the illustrations in the Rivet facsimile.

Coinciding with its inauguration on the website, Rolena Adorno's introductory essay, *Guaman Poma and His Illustrated Chronicle from Colonial Peru: From a Century of Scholarship to a New Era of Reading*, has been published in a print edition. The small bilingual, Spanish/English book is accompanied by a series of color plates that permit the reader to appreciate the true quality of Guaman Poma's drawings. In this new essay and in a more analytical and detailed account in the long "Introduction to the Second Edition: Contextualizing the *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno*," written for the reissue of *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru*, published in 2000 (pp.xi-lxi), Adorno presents in a clear, precise, and rigorous manner, accompanied by an updated bibliography, a survey of the current state of our knowledge of the *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno* and its author, whose profile turns out to be representative of a small, provincial Andean-colonial elite of the period. Descendant of *mitmaq* (individuals permanently trans-

ferred by the Inca from one province to another in the empire) originating from the region of Huánuco and resettled in the fifteenth century in the Huamanga area, Guaman Poma came from a thoroughly Andean cultural and familial context. He was educated by priests from whom he learned, in addition to the Christian religion, reading and writing and Spanish customs. Thus he was able to later become the assistant of various priests and functionaries in the colonial administration. Specific references in the *Nueva crónica* indicate that he would have participated, possibly as an interpreter or justice official (*fiscal*), in the campaigns of "extirpation" of indigenous religion, particularly the efforts by the church inspector Cristóbal de Albornoz to eradicate the cult of *Taqi Onqoy* toward the end of the decade of the 1560s in the area of Lucanas.

Additionally, the original manuscript (called "Poyanne" for the Jesuit house in Poyanne in southern France where it was long housed or "Galvin" for the name of its present owner) of the first version of the *Origen y genealogía de los reyes Incas del Perú* (circa 1590) by the Mercedarian friar Martín de Murúa, found a few years ago by Juan Ossio in a private collection in Dublin, Ireland, confirms that Guaman Poma collaborated as an artist with this priest. In effect, the Poyanne-Galvin codex turns out to be illustrated by 112 magnificent watercolor drawings, the great majority of which, without any doubt, were created by the same hand that drew those of the *Nueva crónica*, that is to say, by Guaman Poma himself (cf. Ossio 2002). Various other archival documents of an administrative character have been found and published from the 1930s onward. Adorno presents and analyses them in order, showing that in the decade of the 1590s Guaman Poma served as an assistant to Amador de Valdepeña, the officially appointed advocate for the Indians (*protector de naturales*), and that he also served on other occasions as an inspector, witness, and interpreter in proceedings confirming land titles and regularizing situations of *de facto* land tenancy that had come about as a consequence of the implementation of the colonial system, with all the profound changes and infinite conflicts that it generated with regard to land rights and ownership.

Yet this phase of Guaman Poma's life, which he spent collaborating with Spanish civil and ecclesiastical officials and apparently seeking his own full integration into the colonial order, was to end, due to his and his family's frustrated efforts to be recognized as lords and legitimate owners of vast properties in the valley of Chupas in the environs of Huamanga. The concession of those lands in 1586 by the viceroy to a group of *mitmaq* from Chachapoyas in recompense for their services to the Crown generated, in effect, a long, troublesome and complic-

ated series of litigations that came to an end in 1600 after various contradictory judgments had been made along the way. At that point Guaman Poma was condemned to public lashes and exiled from the city of Huamanga for a period of two years while being held liable for the payment of the costs of the court proceedings. He had been successfully charged with being a "poor Indian" and "of evil inclination" by the name of Lázaro, who had attempted to obtain privileges and offices through acts of deceit and who had unjustly usurped the title of *cacique* (indigenous noble) (Zorrilla 1977: 63-64).

Rolena Adorno devotes several paragraphs in her "Introduction..." to a review of the judicial documents relating to this dispute. She examines the "Expediente Prado Tello," published by Elías Prado Tello and Alfredo Prado Prado in 1991 and reproduced in facsimile on the Royal Library's website, in which Guaman Poma lays claim, as mentioned, to property rights over the lands of Chupas. She coordinates the information therein contained with the document designated as the "Compulsa Ayacucho," a public document from the beginning of the nineteenth century in whose first part, which was published by Juan Zorrilla in 1977, a copy of a series of legal proceedings from the years 1586-1600 is found. This long fragment gives an account of the dispute between the Chachapoyas and the Guaman family and records the final sentence that left his clan, and particularly Guaman Poma himself, in complete disfavor. Coordinating data and references from these documents with one another as well as with several indirect references in the *Nueva crónica* to the lawsuit regarding the lands of Chupas and the Chachapoyas, Adorno (2000: xxxvii-xxxviii) concludes that, given Guaman Poma's repeated success at upholding his land claims before the Audiencia in Lima, the accusation of fraudulent identity made against him could well have been mounted by the Chachapoyas as the only way to discredit and eliminate the most well prepared and tenacious representative of the Guaman clan. It is possible, indeed probable, that this was the case, in spite of some existing contradictions in the judicial documentation presented by Guaman Poma himself,<sup>2</sup> and in spite of the fact that in an era of profound upheavals in Andean society the creation of *ad hoc* genealogies and

<sup>2</sup> For example, in the "Expediente Prado Tello" Guaman Poma identifies his father by the name of Domingo Guaman Mallqui de Ayala while in the *Nueva crónica* he calls him Martín Guaman Malqui de Ayala (the Martín de Ayala mentioned in the "Expediente" appears to be a brother or other relative), and there are some inconsistencies regarding Guaman Poma's age and parentage as he presents them in the *Nueva crónica* (see, for example, Ossio 2002:39).

even the assumption of alien identities to obtain the recognition of rights, privileges, and offices from the Spanish authorities probably occurred quite frequently, as in the case of Jerónimo Lorenzo Limaylla, also known as Lorenzo Ayllón, in the Mantaro valley of Peru in the decade of 1660 (Puente Luna 2003).

In any event, what Adorno is interested in showing – and without a doubt she accomplishes it in a clear and convincing manner – is the direct and precise, cause-and-effect relationship that exists between Guaman Poma's composition of the *Nueva crónica* and his judicial shifts of fortune. This turn of events engendered his negative perspective on, and profound rejection of, the colonial regime. Apparently after his sentence in 1600 Guaman Poma established himself in Santiago de Chipao in the province of Lucanas (in the southern sierra of the jurisdiction of today's Department of Ayacucho), which was the area that years earlier he had frequented accompanying Cristóbal de Albornoz and where it is probable that, in the decade of 1590, he had worked as a functionary of the Spanish administration. This is deduced from the fact that in petitions contained in the "Expediente Prado Tello" he presents himself, rightly or not, as a "*cacique principal* [ethnic lord] and governor of the Indians and administrator of the communities of the province of Lucanas and Soras, Andamarca and Circa Marca" (Prado Tello and Prado Prado 1991: 181, 347). There in Lucanas, which he knew down to the last detail, as is revealed in the multiple and precise references in the *Nueva crónica* to persons, settlements, micro-histories and places of the region (Barnes 1999), Guaman Poma would have spent a considerable number of the last years of his life occupied in the writing of his extraordinary illustrated chronicle. In an appendix to *Guaman Poma and His Illustrated Chronicle ...*, Rolena Adorno presents the text of a letter, originally found in the Archives of the Indies in Seville and published by Guillermo Lohmann Villena (1945), which Guaman Poma addressed to Philip III from Santiago de Chipao (Lucanas) on the fourteenth of February, 1615. In it he announced that he had just finished "a chronicle or general history" and that to write it, he, a descendant of the royal house of the Inca kings, had had to abandon all other occupations and endure a thousand privations.

In the first edition of *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance...* (1986), Rolena Adorno had carried out a refined literary and semiotic analysis of the *Nueva crónica*, carefully scrutinizing its sources, genres, canons, and literary and historiographic conventions, the framework and structure of its narration, its allegories and textual metaphors, the work's implicit and explicit goals and the apparent polemics in which it was

engaged, the function of the drawings and their relationship to the prose text, the iconological codes manipulated, the historical content and didactic value of the deeds narrated, the complex articulation among the elements derived from oral Andean traditions and the components of the ideological and Christian-occidental cultural patterns, as well as the culture, sensibilities, and ideas of its author, as these can be glimpsed through the pages of the chronicle. Now, upon presenting again the book that in its moment represented a real milestone in the history of the literary criticism of the *Nueva crónica* and which still constitutes, after nearly two decades, an indispensable reading for the comprehension of the work, Rolena Adorno in the "Introduction to the Second Edition" had chosen to relate the chronicle to the "man" Guaman Poma, about whose life, travels, and activities a relatively copious body of documentary information has been gathered over the years, as we have seen. She demonstrates the complete coherence and the multiple correspondences between, on one hand, the documentation external to the chronicle, from which we know about his historical trajectory, his travels, his experiences, his aspirations, and his frustrations, and, on the other, the content of his work, from the vindication of his nobility to his enmity toward the Chachapoyas and his great familiarity with the region of Lucanas. In doing this, Adorno demonstrates – without the necessity of even mentioning it explicitly – the total lack of foundation and absolute inconsistency of the contents of a series of manuscripts, supposedly from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whose transcription has circulated in recent years in Italian and international academic circles and according to which the author of the *Nueva crónica* had been the mestizo Jesuit Blas Valera (San Juan de la Frontera de Chachapoyas, Perú 1545 - Málaga, España, 1597).

We refer to the manuscripts that have been divulged, one after another, in academic circles from the middle of the 1990s by Laura Laurencich Minelli and which are the property, together with some pseudo-quipus, of Clara Miccinelli, a secondary school teacher of Latin from Naples who, with Carlo Animato, has brought forth several different manuscripts. In this regard, one should mention the precise, forceful, and devastating criticisms of Juan Carlos Estenssoro (1997) and Rolena Adorno (1998 and 1999), as well as the specific flaws of inconsistencies and anachronisms that have been pointed out directly or indirectly by Xavier Albó (1998), Isacio Pérez Fernández (1998), Monica Barnes (1999), Francisco de Borja Medina (1999), Juan Ossio (2000), Teodoro Hampe Martínez (2001), Franklin Pease G.Y. and Francisco de Borja Medina (2001), among others. These criticisms

are found to have their full external verification (and explication) when one reviews the bibliography of Miccinelli and Animato (cf. Cárdenas Bunsen 1999). In effect, Madame Miccinelli is the author of a series of esoteric books unfailingly constructed according to a single literary artifice, that is, starting from the supposed discovery of some extraordinary document that even has an extra-sensorial origin. Her various titles include: *Il Principe di Sansevero: verità e riabilitazione* (Naples, 1984), catalogued by the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze under the thematic rubric "paranormal phenomena and techniques; dreams and mysteries;" *Il tesoro del Principe di Sansevero: luce nei sotterranei* (Naples, 1984); *E Dio creò l'Uomo e la Massoneria. I documenti segreti, la superloggia inquietante e tutti gli arcani del Tempio di Raimondo di Sangro Principe di Sansevero* (Genoa, 1985); and, with Carlo Animato ("expert in the study of enigmatic writings and psychic sciences," as he describes himself in Animato, et al. 1989: 30), *Quipu. Il nodo parlante dei misteriosi incas* (Genoa, 1989) and *Il Conte di Montecristo: favola alchemica e massonica vendetta. Con scritti inediti di Alessandro Dumas e Francesco Gaeta* (Roma, 1991).

A small, although perhaps significant, observation of a chronological nature can be made: After the supposedly casual discovery in 1983, in her home, of the first manuscript (Animato, Rossi and Miccinelli 1989: 79), Madame Miccinelli apparently abandoned the Peruvian theme in order to devote herself, again in collaboration with Mr. Animato, to the study and publication of certain astounding, unpublished letters of Alexander Dumas and the Neapolitan poet Francesco Gaeta, which also had been discovered by them (*El Conte di Montecristo...*, 1991). In recent years, Madame Miccinelli has been discovering, always in her own home, various other papers of Blas Valera, of a content progressively more sensational and in a manner each time more colorful and attracting more attention.<sup>3</sup> Yet she has done so only since the moment in which Laurencich Minelli began to become interested in the first manuscript published in *Quipu* (Animato, Rossi and Miccinelli 1989). On the other hand, more enlightening still is the consultation of *La Cappella Sansevero* (first edition 1987, second edition 1994) of Professor Rosanna Cioffi, art historian and former dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Naples II. In her work ([1987] 1994: 144-145, 146-147), Professor Cioffi denounced and demonstrated with analytical precision the inconsistency and falsity of two

<sup>3</sup>These items include one with decorative motifs in the Chancay-Chimú style, a portrait of "Huaman" (sic) Poma, a graphic representation of the *ceques* very similar to that proposed by Tom Zuidema, and numerous other rareties of the same kind.



notarial documents, found (completely out of context) in the Notarial Archive of Naples and published by Madame Miccinelli in *Il tesoro del Principe de Sansevero* (1984). If they had been authentic, these documents would have established that the extremely fine finishing of two famous Baroque statues located in the Sansevero Chapel in Naples, which represent a reclining Christ figure covered with a light cloth and a male figure extricating himself from a thick netting, would have turned out to be the product of an alchemical transformation into marble of veils and nets of cloth fibers, carried out by the Prince of Sansevero. The sculptures are, in point of fact, the work of well known sculptors of the eighteenth century. Without a doubt, Rolena Adorno has done very well in her latest works to refrain from even a single mention of the Neapolitan manuscripts and the various related papers.

In any event, if these fanciful manuscripts have had any merit, it is – as we have seen, above – that of having stimulated, in reaction, new and more profound analyses of the *Nueva crónica* combined with the study of all the information, external to the work, relating to the life and world of Guaman Poma. To these new investigations has just been added the codicological study of the autograph manuscript, carried out on the occasion of the preparation of its digital edition, which confirms that the mind and hand of a single individual – those of Guaman Poma – carried out the entire process of the elaboration of the work. The long essay by Rolena Adorno, “A Witness unto Itself: the Integrity of the Autograph Manuscript of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala’s *El primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno* (1615/1616),” constitutes the nucleus of *New Studies of the Autograph Manuscript of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala’s “Nueva crónica y buen gobierno”* (2003), written by Adorno and Ivan Boserup, Keeper of Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Royal Library of Denmark. The book constitutes a fascinating journey into the interior of the pages of the codex which, upon revealing the details of the laborious process of its composition, draws us close to the person of Guaman Poma in an almost tangible fashion, allowing us to appreciate his idiosyncracies, his determination, his reflections, his deepest concerns, and his hardships. Adorno reconstructs step by step the procedure followed by Guaman Poma in the preparation of his chronicle through the description and analysis of the formal characteristics of the codex (catalogued in detail by Boserup and Adorno in a series of surveys that are found in the appendix). These elements include the watermarks, photographed for the first time, the calligraphy, the different types and sizes of letters used in writing, the changes in the color of ink, the position of the drawings with respect to the prose text, the ink stains, the textual corrections, modi-

fications, and additions, the superimposition of words, the annotations at the bottom margin of many pages, the changes in the numbering of the folios, the ordering, sewing, and binding of the quires, the sheets added, or removed and replaced. The sequence and logic of the choices that Guaman Poma had to make in the different phases of the elaboration of the manuscript, as when toward the end he had to reconcile his desire to be as explicit and complete as possible with the scarcity of paper occasioned by his lack of economic resources, all testify to the homogeneity, the meticulousness, and the rigor with which the author pursued his goals. These were to create a work coherent in its content, complete in its information, convincing in its argumentation, and harmonious in its structure and form, – all for the purpose of its being appreciated and read by king Philip III.

In “A Witness unto Itself” Adorno also makes interesting chronological points regarding the redaction and history of the manuscript, such as, for example, the fact that Guaman Poma was to begin to write the *Nueva crónica* only after his condemnation to exile from Huamanga, that is to say, after 19 December 1600, and not in the middle of the 1580s as often has been written on the basis of his own assertion that he devoted to the task “twenty if not thirty” years. In favor of this hypothesis (cf. Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance...*, 2000: xvi) is the absence in the chronicle of unequivocal and frequent references to dates earlier than 1600 and the multiple direct and indirect references, from the first pages of the work, to the years 1612 and 1613. The possibility remains open, certainly, that Guaman Poma had begun to write a first version of his work in earlier times, perhaps in the period (around 1590?) in which he collaborated as an artist with Fray Martín de Murúa, whose chronicle presents multiple parallelisms with that of Guaman Poma (Ossio 2001). What is certain is that the Copenhagen codex was brought to fruition on the basis of a draft, as Adorno rightly remarks, noting the regular dimensions of the majority of the chapters, in general, well calibrated with the size of the quires, and the general control of the writing, preventing it from spilling over into the outer margins of the pages, except in the annotation he belatedly added to the completed text. Likewise, Adorno points out that the final touches to the manuscript were realized in some moment in 1616, in Lima, shortly before the author delivered his manuscript to unnamed Spanish authorities. This is verified on the portrait page of the viceroy Don Juan de Mendoza y Luna, which was added to the codex after the quires had already been sewn. The caption states, “he governed until the year one thousand six hundred and fifteen” and, in effect, this viceroy left office

precisely on 18 December 1615. Guaman Poma had to have added the caption to the portrait, if not the portrait page itself, after that date, that is, in 1616.

Finally, with regard to the subsequent history of the manuscript after it left Guaman Poma's hands, Adorno announces the recent discovery, made by the Danish scholar Harald Ilsøe, of a list of books in the Royal Library's archive that not only proves that the *Nueva corónica* was conserved in this library already by 1729 but also that the manuscript was likely to have been acquired much earlier, and precisely at the time of Danish king Frederick III (1648-1670). This lends credence to the hypothesis, put forward in 1948 by Raúl Porrás Barrenechea (1948: 8), that the manuscript was probably taken to Denmark by Cornelius Pedersen Lerche, the Danish ambassador to Spain in two periods between 1650 and 1662. The *Nueva Corónica* was to leave the Royal Library for some years between 1908 and 1930 in order to be studied by Richard Pietschmann, and, after his death, by the man who continued his work, Ferdinand Hestermann. Hestermann finished the transcription of the text but was not able to publish it. It was, in fact, only with the Paris facsimile edition of 1936 that the indefatigable, utopian, and moving creative endeavor of a Peruvian Indian of the early seventeenth century began to be known and to make known to the world how a people of a great and ancient civilization had lived and interpreted colonial domination and the cultural impact of the Old World on the New. Now, thanks to the online digital version of the illustrated codex and, most of all, thanks to the extraordinary analytical, exegetical labor and efforts at diffusion of the work realized by Rolena Adorno – definitively no less tenacious than Guaman Poma – a new and more advanced era of reading of the *Nueva corónica* has begun.

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